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Cultures of Water: Exploring the role of water as a home-making practice of Burmese migrant households in metropolitan NSW

Louisa Welland
University of Wollongong

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Cultures of Water: Exploring the role of water as a home-making practice of Burmese migrant households in metropolitan NSW

Abstract

This thesis aims to investigate the role of water as a home-making practice in the everyday domestic activities of first generation Burmese migrant households in metropolitan New South Wales, Australia. Investigating domestic water is both an urgent and timely matter. Firstly, this is due to the increasing pressures from climate change, population growth and rising affluence that are reducing the coping abilities of water security networks, particularly in Australia. Secondly, urgency arises from the volume of water that is consumed by Australian households. By focusing on Burmese households, this thesis considers how ethnic minority groups can bring with them 'imaginative capacities' in order to use resources, such as water, more sustainably. The conceptual framework this thesis adopts follows an approach which understands water as an embodied homemaking practice, considers the relationships within the household and pays attention to not only practices, but the reciprocal relationships between users and water. Empirical data was sourced through semi-structured interviews and home insights. The results are presented in vignette-style chapters, which provide in-depth understandings of lived experience. Attention is then given to the drinking and personal hygiene practices across all narratives, exploring how water is used to (re)create sense of home and self. The conclusion argues that whilst many Burmese migrants change their practices following the comfort and convenience of Australian life, certain waterrelated practices are retained to maintain roles and responsibilities and to make spaces of the home feel 'right'. Additionally, the findings point to how through more intimate connections with water, migrants are more mindful and responsible surrounding water use. This may have implications for Australian household sustainability policies. III

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CULTURES OF WATER

*Exploring the role of water as a home-making practice in
Burmese migrant households in metropolitan New South Wales*

LOUISA WELLAND

APRIL 2015

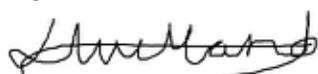


A thesis submitted in part fulfillment of the requirement of the Honours Degree of Bachelor of Science (Honours) in the Department of Geography and Sustainable Communities April 2015

DECLARATION

The information in this thesis is entirely the result of investigations conducted by the author, unless otherwise acknowledged, and has not been submitted in part, or otherwise, for any other degree or qualification.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Samuel Wallace', written over a horizontal line.

Dated: 19/04/2015

All chapter title photographs by Samuel Wallace, 2010.

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to investigate the role of water as a home-making practice in the everyday domestic activities of first generation Burmese migrant households in metropolitan New South Wales, Australia. Investigating domestic water is both an urgent and timely matter. Firstly, this is due to the increasing pressures from climate change, population growth and rising affluence that are reducing the coping abilities of water security networks, particularly in Australia. Secondly, urgency arises from the volume of water that is consumed by Australian households. By focusing on Burmese households, this thesis considers how ethnic minority groups can bring with them 'imaginative capacities' in order to use resources, such as water, more sustainably. The conceptual framework this thesis adopts follows an approach which understands water as an embodied home-making practice, considers the relationships within the household and pays attention to not only practices, but the reciprocal relationships between users and water. Empirical data was sourced through semi-structured interviews and home insights. The results are presented in vignette-style chapters, which provide in-depth understandings of lived experience. Attention is then given to the drinking and personal hygiene practices across all

narratives, exploring how water is used to (re)create sense of home and self. The conclusion argues that whilst many Burmese migrants change their practices following the comfort and convenience of Australian life, certain water-related practices are retained to maintain roles and responsibilities and to make spaces of the home feel 'right'. Additionally, the findings point to how through more intimate connections with water, migrants are more mindful and responsible surrounding water use. This may have implications for Australian household sustainability policies.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION



1.1 Aims and Research Questions

The overarching aim of this thesis is to respond to the gap in the literature around the cultural environmental knowledge of ethnic minority groups in relation to household sustainability. In particular, this research investigates the role of water as a home-making practice in the everyday domestic activities of first generation Burmese migrant households in metropolitan New South Wales (NSW), Australia. In doing so, this work seeks to contribute to a growing body of research that explores how domestic water practices may either rupture or reinforce roles, responsibilities, identities, and familial relationships. A better understanding of how individual and collective identities are made and remade through different domestic water practices that sustain the space of the home may help with the development and implementation of household sustainability strategies.

To address the aim, this thesis responds to four research questions:

- i. What ideas and practices about domestic water do first generation Burmese migrants bring to recreate a sense of home in Australia?
- ii. Which ideas and practices around domestic water are retained after migrating to Australia and why?
- iii. Which ideas and practices around domestic water change after migration to Australia and why?
- iv. What imaginative capacities surrounding domestic water do first generation Burmese migrants bring to Australia and how do these inform household sustainability policies around water consumption?

This chapter outlines the research significance, discussing the importance of researching the connections between domestic water, household sustainability, and ethnic minority groups. Attention then turns to introducing Burma, particularly to the socio-economic diversity and political context to help account for the recent flow of ethnically diverse Burmese migrants to Australia.

1.2 Why this Project?

Investigating water as a home-making practice is both an urgent and timely matter because it speaks to a larger body of research investigating how the household is connected to sustainability debates (Gibson et al., 2013; Lane & Gorman-Murray, 2011; Head et al., 2013), including that conducted by the Australian Centre for Cultural Environmental Research (AUSCCER) at the University of Wollongong. This scholarship applies cultural theories and methods in order to better understand a broad range of environmental issues, concepts, and policies including nature, climate change, and sustainability.

The household has recently become the focus of government environmental policy as a result of a neo-liberalising discourse. A neo-liberal political agenda circulates the idea that sustainability is the responsibility of the individual. Indeed, a growing body of literature considers the household to be a pivotal scale of social organisation for pro-environmental behaviour (Reid et al., 2010; Gibson et al., 2011, 2013; Lane & Gorman-Murray, 2011; Tudor et al., 2011). Given that the carbon-intensive activities of humans are influencing the climate now more than ever before, questions surrounding sustainability must be urgently met with solutions that can help adaptation to unprecedented environmental changes.

One strand of research within AUSCCER is particularly interested in understanding the relationship between ethnic diversity and household sustainability. A focus upon ethnic diversity is important given that very little is known about the cultural environmental knowledge of minority ethnic groups living in Australia. Indeed, Klocker and Head (2013) argue that the majority of cultural environmental research to date has focused on ethnic majority Anglo-Australian households. The practices of ethnic minority households are largely ignored, despite the fact that migrants bring with them diverse sets of experiences and knowledge. The 'imaginative capacities' of ethnic minority households can help address the Eurocentric myopia around household sustainability practices.

1.3 Why Domestic Water?

Firstly, domestic water in Australia is an urgent topic given the increasing pressures on this resource. Gibson et al. (2013) attributed the pressures to the combination of a changing climate, population growth, and rising affluence. With the onset of climate change, drought periods in Australia are predicted to increase in frequency and intensity (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2007), placing more strain on the already narrow coping range of water security networks. Australia's population is currently estimated to be 23.5 million people (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2014), and based on future fertility levels, life expectancy, and migration, this is projected to nearly double to 46 million by 2075 (ABS, 2013a). In urban Australia, domestic water accounts for a significant proportion of total water consumption. Households are the third largest consumers of water, accounting for 9% of total water consumption, behind agriculture (70%) and supply, sewerage, and drainage (12%) (ABS, 2013b). Thus, there are direct links between population size and growth and water use and availability (Carroll, 2010). According to a 2010 report by the Water Services Association of Australia, if ABS population projections are correct, urban water demand will increase by up to 1,147 gigalitres over 2008-09 levels by 2056, representing a 76% increase in water consumption by major cities. Additionally, wealthier households tend to consume more water, based on their larger house size and number of water-using technologies (Harlan et al., 2009). Considering climate change, population growth, and rising affluence, it is clear to see how these factors are converging to create a 'perfect storm' in terms of water security. Thus, sustainable domestic water supply and consumption is imperative to Australia's future, particularly given its position as the Earth's driest inhabited continent.

Secondly, urgency arises from the volume of domestic water consumed by Australian households. Domestic consumption is both direct and indirect. For example, households in greater Sydney directly consume 70% of the total water for the area. Indirectly, around 70% of Australia's available water is used in agriculture for irrigation purposes (Gibson et al., 2013). Australian urban residents' water consumption has trebled since the 19th century, to

a daily average of 300 litres (Davison, 2008). This level of consumption greatly exceeds the 50-60 litre daily level that is required to satisfy basic human requirements for drinking, cooking, cleaning, and washing (Gilbertson et al., 2011; Gleick, 1996, 1998; Crockett & Carroll, 1997).

Davison (2008) identifies the fluctuation of Australian household water consumption from the mid-19th century to present day. Davison (2008) suggests that the shift in demand for domestic water, especially by urban residents, is influenced not only by institutional shifts in supply, regulation and climatic and technological changes, but also by cultural changes, engendered by aesthetic, hedonistic, and hygienic motives. The introduction of piped water and underground sewage systems in the 19th century precipitated the first step to increased water usage, through state provision of a constant household supply. Sofoulis (2005) explains how sociotechnical systems that deliver domestic water have embodied a 'fantasy of an endless supply' for Australian residents connected to 'town water'. Australian household water consumption continued to grow in the 19th and 20th centuries due to the combination of rising affluence, changing ideas of cleanliness, and advances in domestic technology, such as washing machines, power-showers and dishwashers. On the one hand, Kurz (2002) contended that affluence may decrease water use. On the other hand, Harlan et al. (2009) found that because higher income houses tend to be larger, they consume more water due to the increased number of water amenities, such as spas, fountains, and aquariums. Here, water embodies social status via aesthetical and recreational affordances, which are deeply ingrained in upper-middle class lifestyles.

Since the mid-1990s, however, domestic water consumption in Australian cities began to decline. This may be explained by; the privatisation of supply, increased water prices, stringent restrictions due to droughts and the introduction of water-saving technologies such as dual-flushing toilets and water-saving showerheads. Beginning in the 1950s, it was the role of Australian states to provide water to households, hence the rise of large state agencies entrusted with water supply and sanitation (Dovers, 2008). Since neo-liberalism took hold in the 1990s, a partial and ongoing shift in water

governance has occurred, such as the privatisation of water supply and the introduction of pricing mechanisms. Neo-liberalism is a political project under which governments are expected to remove regulatory restraints on the movements of goods and services (Godden, 2008). Dovers (2008) criticises this institutionalised water and waste system as being based on 'big pipe in, big pipe out' logic, which fails to encourage frugality and is difficult to reform, given the large-scale infrastructure. The difficulty of systemic reform, together with pressures on the water supply, mean that a different approach to understanding domestic water practices is needed. Together, this literature signals the importance of cultural environmental research that brings to the fore questions of practices, skills, experiences and ideas surrounding domestic water consumption.

1.4 Why Study the Burmese Population in New South Wales?

1.4.1 Burma

Burma,* officially – and controversially – renamed Myanmar by the military junta in 1989, is located in south-east Asia, bordered by China, Thailand, Laos, Bangladesh, and India (Figure 1). Burma, by Gross National Product (GNP), is one of the poorest countries in the region. Globally it is ranked 150 out of 187 countries on the Human Development Index, positioning it in the low human development category (United Nations Development Program, 2014). The topography of Burma features a dry plain in the centre of the country, surrounded by steep, jungle covered mountains. Burma has a tropical climate characterised by three seasons: monsoonal, cool and hot. The hot and humid period (February to May) has very low precipitation levels, with temperatures often higher than 38 degrees Celsius. The monsoonal season (May to October) sees more moderate temperatures. Dry, cooler weather is experienced from October to February. Average rainfall across Burma is variable. Along the coast, average annual precipitation ranges between 2,500mm and 5,000mm with delta regions receiving

approximately 3,750mm. In dry, arid areas (such as the Mandalay Division, Figure 1) annual rainfall is less than 1,000mm (Zaw, 2010).

Climate change impacts are predicted across the country. In coastal and delta regions, more frequent cyclones and floods are expected, as well as sea water intrusion and changes in precipitation patterns and intensity (Zaw, 2010). People living on the coast are particularly vulnerable to cyclones, as evidenced by Cyclone Nargis in 2008, the country's most devastating natural disaster. Whereas those living in the drier centre of Burma are expected to face increased drought periods (Zaw, 2010).

Ethnicity is an important political instrument in Burma. A 1974 Constitution declared there to be seven ethnic minority states: Chin, Kachin, Karen, Kayah (Karenni), Mon, Rakhine (Arakan), and Shan, as well as seven divisions (Burman) (Figure 1). Importantly however, as Hynes (2003) notes, this geographic division does not reflect the ethnic complexity of the population. The Burmese population is extremely ethnically diverse, composed of approximately 135 ethnic groups and sub-groups, each of which have their own dialect, beliefs, and customs (Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA), 2006). Although no detailed census of the ethnic minority population has been attempted since 1931, it is estimated that minority groups compose at least one third of the total population (Hynes, 2003). The largest ethnic group in Burma is the Burman people (DIMA, 2006). Buddhism is the predominant religion in Burma, practiced by almost 90% of the population. However, other religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism are also practiced. Considering this ethnic and religious diversity, there may also be significant diversity in cultural attitudes and behaviours towards water within the Burmese community. Indeed, Head (2012) argues that there are great diversities of water behaviours and practices between individuals and within social groups.

The Burmans' dominance over ethnic minority groups is the source of considerable ethnic tension,

* In this thesis I refer to the country officially named the Republic of the Union of Myanmar as Burma because many countries refuse to accept the country's new title as they question the authority of the military junta to make such a decision (Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, 2006).



Figure 1: Map of Burma.

Source: United Nations Department of Field Support Cartographic Section (2012)

resulting in recurring rebellions and, coupled with human rights violations practised by the government, has resulted in significant numbers of refugees (DIMA, 2006). Many refugees fleeing the country identify with the marginalised Karen ethnic minority. Today, there are an estimated two to three million Burmese living outside their home country, with most of these settling throughout Asia (Egrettau, 2012). However, in recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of Burmese migrants settling in Australia (see Section 1.4.2).

Domestic water supply in Burma is differentiated both spatially and socially. In the former capital of Burma, Yangon (also known by its colonial name Rangoon), piped water is delivered through ageing British colonial infrastructure from four distant reservoirs and wells in the city (Nagashio, 2002). This system supplies water to approximately 60% of the urban population (Than, 2010). The remaining population of the city relies on private wells, public tanks, ponds, and collected household rainwater (Source New Mandala, 2009). Urban water is managed at city level, where water users pay a small fixed fee for services. In rural areas, the Department of Development Affairs delivers water supply schemes to villages. This includes the development of water supply infrastructure such as wells and pumping stations, as well as the provision of safe drinking water (Relief Web, 2010). However, the long-term management of these schemes is unclear (ISF-UTS, 2011). Through much of rural Burma

water is sourced from communal ponds, hand-dug wells and rainwater tanks at the household and community level (Tripartite Core Group, 2009; Myanmar Survey Research, 2011). During the dry season, villages that depend primarily on artificial ponds are at high risk of severe water stress.

1.4.2 Burmese Population in Australia

This thesis responds to the argument proposed by Klocker and Head (2013) that ethnically diverse experiences and knowledge should be considered when investigating household sustainability. There are currently no studies of the household sustainability practices of Burmese migrants in Australia, despite this minority group being one of the most recent and largest to arrive in Australia. Census data reports a 65% increase in the number of Burma-born Australian residents from 2006 to 2011 (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2012). This marked increase in the number of migrants is primarily due to the large intake of refugees who identify as the marginalised Karen ethnicity (Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2013). According to the 2011 census, there are 23,230 Burmese migrants living in Australia, compared to only around 10,000 10 years before (Figure 2).

Burmese migrants are unevenly distributed across Australia. In 2012-13, Victoria received 45% of the total intake, Western Australia received 18%, and NSW received 14%. The majority of those granted permanent residency were through the

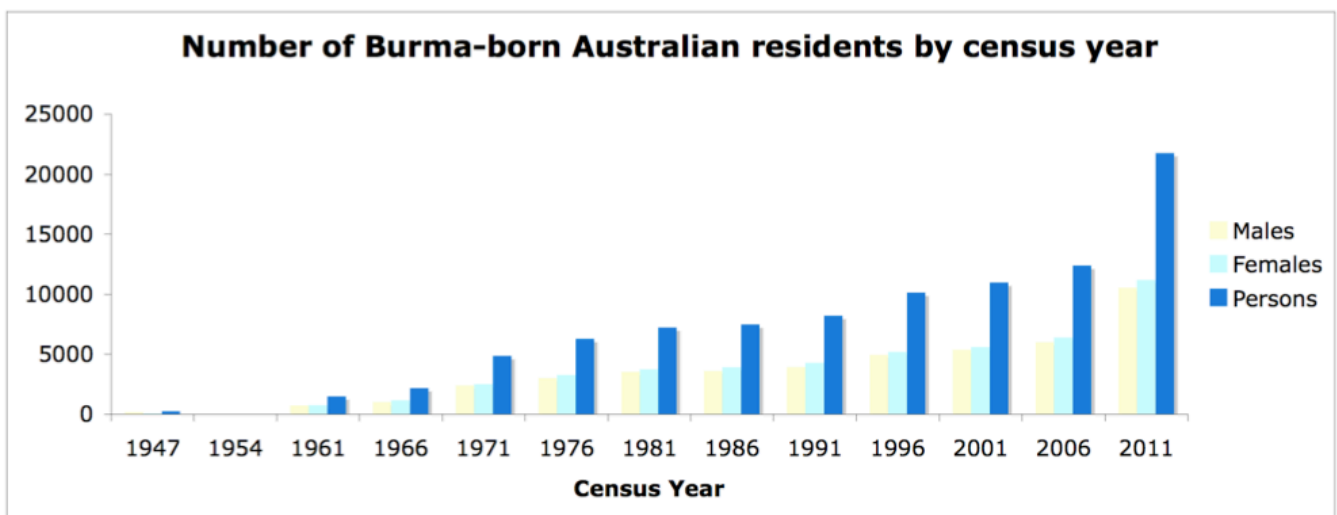


Figure 2: Number of Burma-born Australian residents by census year, 1947-2011.

Source: ABS (2008) and ABS (2011), in Taylor (2013)

Humanitarian Programme (77%). The Skill Stream accounted for only 11% of all permanent migrants (Table 1). Despite the marked increase in Burmese nationals living in Australia, Australian scholarly research on this minority group is limited to a handful of studies in health related disciplines (for example, Schweitzer et al., 2011; Borwick et al., 2013; Chaves et al., 2009). In summary, this thesis argues that the Burmese community, as one of the most recent and largest minority migrant groups, will provide important insights into ways domestic water is used as a home-making practice.

1.5 Thesis Structure

The research aim and questions are addressed across the nine remaining chapters of this thesis. Chapter 2 reviews the different strands of literature around household sustainability, particularly focusing on water, then outlines the conceptual approach that frames this research. Chapter 3 describes the

methodological design deployed. The chapter is structured to explain how the methodological approach established rigour, discussing participant recruitment, data analysis techniques, positionality, and the challenges of cross-cultural research.

Chapters 4 to 7 employ vignettes to acknowledge the importance of lived experience and reflect participant diversity. Chapter 4 shares Min's story and explores how as a student living in Australia he connects with water on an intimate and sensory level, forming a reciprocal relationship with water that maintains water saving practices. In Chapter 5, Tin's narrative provides insights into how water is trusted, what constitutes waste water, and explores further the idea of 'intimate water'. Chapter 6 follows Kyaw Zaw's story, exploring how drinking water is trusted, the intimacy of personal hygiene practices, and the connection between domestic water and religion. Lastly, Chapter 7 focuses on Mya. Unlike the previous three chapters, which

Table 1: Number of Burmese nationals granted a permanent Australian visa, 2009-10 to 2012-13

Source: Internal data collected by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (2013)

Permanent Visa	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Humanitarian Programme	2,029	1,516	1,957	2,408
Humanitarian visas as a proportion of all permanent visas (%)	83.4	80.9	81.4	84.8
Skilled migration	204	182	246	208
Skilled visas as a proportion of all permanent visas (%)	8.4	9.7	10.2	7.3
Family migration	197	172	193	221
Family visas as a proportion of all permanent visas (%)	8.1	9.2	8	7.8
Special eligibility	3	5	7	1
Total permanent migrants	2,433	1,875	2,403	2,838

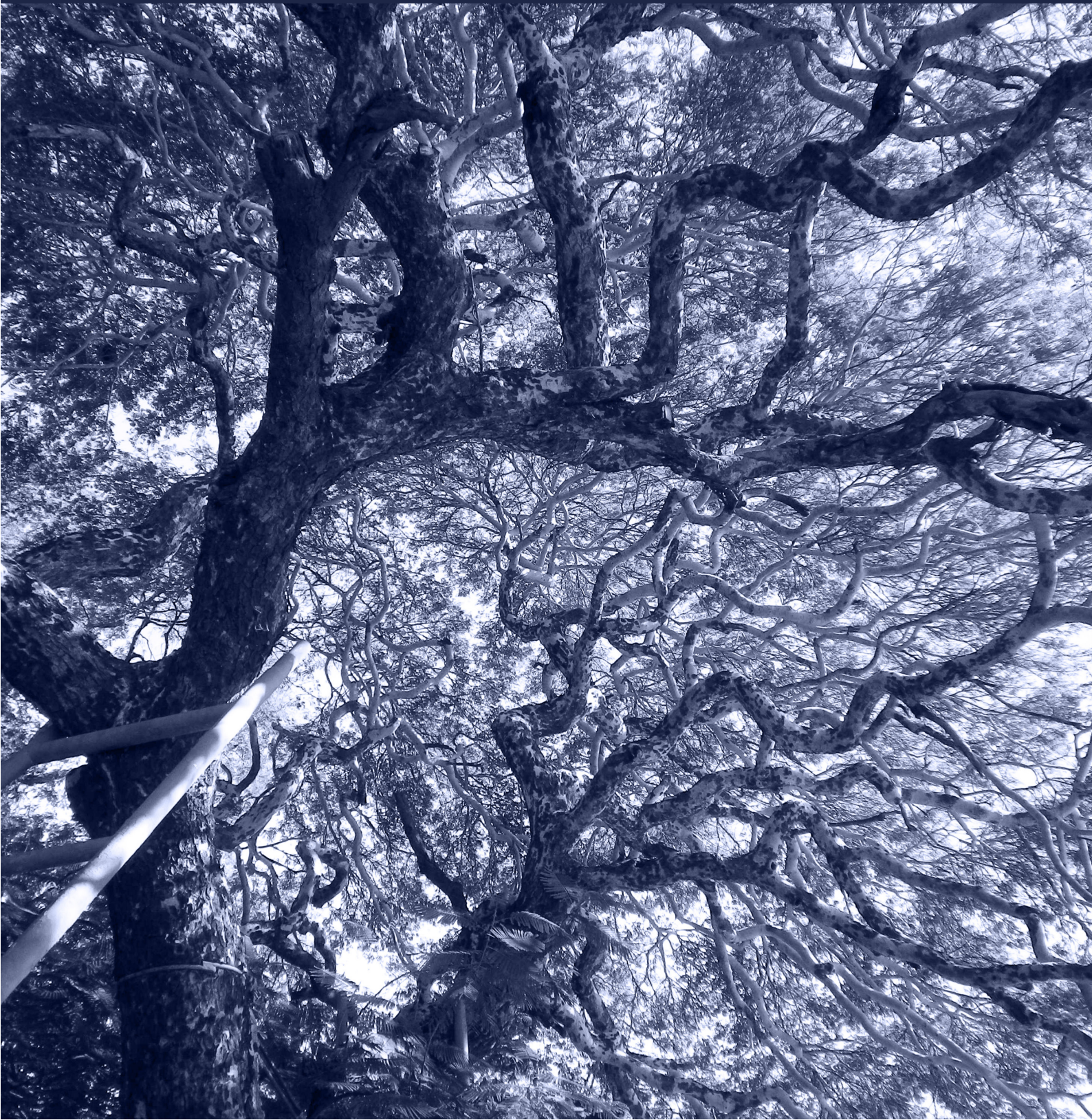
explore insights from relatively affluent majority ethnic groups, Chapter 7 reveals Mya's story, who identifies as Chin (ethnic minority group) and was granted asylum in Australia. Thus, this chapter provides insights into 'physically laboured water' and how water is 'gendered'. Each vignette chapter aims to understand how domestic water practices constitute home-making practices, by illustrating the sets of ideas and material and sensorial knowledge surrounding domestic water that shapes sense of self and place.

Chapter 8 explores the drinking water practices across all 16 participant narratives, bringing together the key themes that emerged through discourse and narrative analysis. Chapter 9 pays attention to the personal hygiene practices of all 16 participants, focusing upon washing bodies and laundering.

Lastly, Chapter 10 concludes the thesis by discussing how the aims and research questions are addressed. The chapter suggests further research that could be undertaken in order to better understand how domestic water practices and embodied knowledge help to sustain roles and responsibilities, and implications for environmental policy.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW



2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the contribution of cultural environmental research to household sustainability literature, and more particularly research investigating domestic water cultures. The aim of this chapter is twofold. First, the literature review draws attention to how this thesis helps fill a gap in cultural environmental research by addressing the Eurocentrism of household sustainability research. Second, it outlines how this thesis makes a theoretical contribution by considering domestic water consumption as an embodied home-making practice.

2.2 Cultural Environmental Research

Unlike early understandings of culture in geography in the 1920s proposed by Carl Sauer as a 'way of life' or as homogenous, bound entities (Russell & Kniffen, 1951), many contemporary cultural environmental geographers understand culture as "a *process* in which people are actively engaged... a dynamic mix of symbols, beliefs, languages and practices that people create, not a fixed thing or entity governing humans" (Anderson, 1999, p.4, italics in original). This way of thinking is influenced by embracing and exploring difference, a philosophy advocated in post-structuralism. As Anderson (1999) notes, cultural research is situated in a geographic context as individuals construct their understandings of the world in spaces, places and environments. Thus, individuals construct the locations where social life is constituted, structured and changed; in other words, their geographies. Also, as Head et al. (2013, p.4) explain, "people make and remake culture as individuals, communities and in institutions and academic disciplines." This cultural negotiation is carried out in everyday practices and is temporally and spatially manifested. By applying cultural environmental research concepts and methods, this scholarship attempts to better understand a broad range of environmental issues, concepts, and policies.

2.3 Cultural Environmental Research and Household Sustainability

Cultural environmental research exploring household sustainability is relatively new. The emergence of this strand of research at the household, or meso-level, may be understood in a neo-liberal political context as highly important in driving pro-environmental behaviour (Reid et al., 2010). Neo-liberal political strategies that emphasise the role of individuals as 'citizen consumers' when making consumption choices shift the burden of environmental responsibility onto households, rather than governments or corporations (Lane & Gorman-Murray, 2011; Gibson et al., 2013). This approach assumes that by providing individuals with facts and figures, they are able to make calculated, rational decisions and are thus able to change their behaviour, ideally in more sustainable directions. Waitt et al. (2012) provide Australian examples of these neo-liberal government policies, such as the introduction of insulation funding, solar hot water rebates, and green loans. However, as Gibson et al. (2013) and Head et al. (2013) remind us, these policies to meet sustainability goals do not always have the intended outcomes. For example, smart meters have the potential to overlook household practices regarded as non-negotiable (Strengers, 2011) and the installation of rainwater tanks does not necessarily translate into water savings (Moy, 2012).

Additionally, many neo-liberal environmental policy approaches tend to oversimplify the conceptualisation of the household. Gibson et al. (2013, p.5) argue that these approaches "treat households as black boxes – freestanding, bounded social units operating only at the local, domestic scale." Challenging this thinking, Head et al. (2013) present an alternative framing, bringing to the fore relational thinking by paying attention to governance, materiality, and practice. Here, governance refers to the systems that provide and regulate water and energy to the household and the implications that these political processes have for sustainability (Head et al., 2013). Materiality focuses on the relationships in the household between humans and the 'things' in everyday life, be this technology, infrastructure, or non-humans (Head et al., 2013). Lastly, practice focuses on the embodied habits and routines of everyday life and

the ways these are tied up in practices of household sustainability.

This relational framework conceives households as entangled within a network of connections across different scales, each containing a variety of social and familial structures. Head et al. (2013, p.3) argue that households are “inextricably linked into the social, technological and regulatory networks that make up suburbs, cities, regions and nations.” Such thinking demands paying attention to the constellations of relationships that comprise the house as home, including the cultural, embodied, material, and social. In this way, domestic water consumption can be thought of as one part of a complex web of everyday household practices that sustain the house as home.

2.4 Water Cultures

The term ‘water cultures’ draws attention to the fact that water is integrated socially and culturally into our everyday lives, often in ways that are regarded at first glance unimportant. It is the mundane nature of water that renders it invisible, except when there is too much in times of flood, or too little in times of drought (Supski and Lindsay, 2013). Cultures of water is an interdisciplinary field of research. Important contributions include those made by anthropologists (Strang, 2005, 2004; Kaïka, 2005), historians (Davison, 2008; Troy, 2008; Goodall, 2008), sociologists (Shove, 2003; Strengers, 2011) as well as geographers (Askew & McGuirk, 2004; Gibbs, 2006, 2010; Jackson, 2006) (Figure 3). There is also a growing body of research examining the commonalities and differences in cultures of water (Allon & Sofoulis, 2006; Strang, 2004; Head & Muir, 2007).

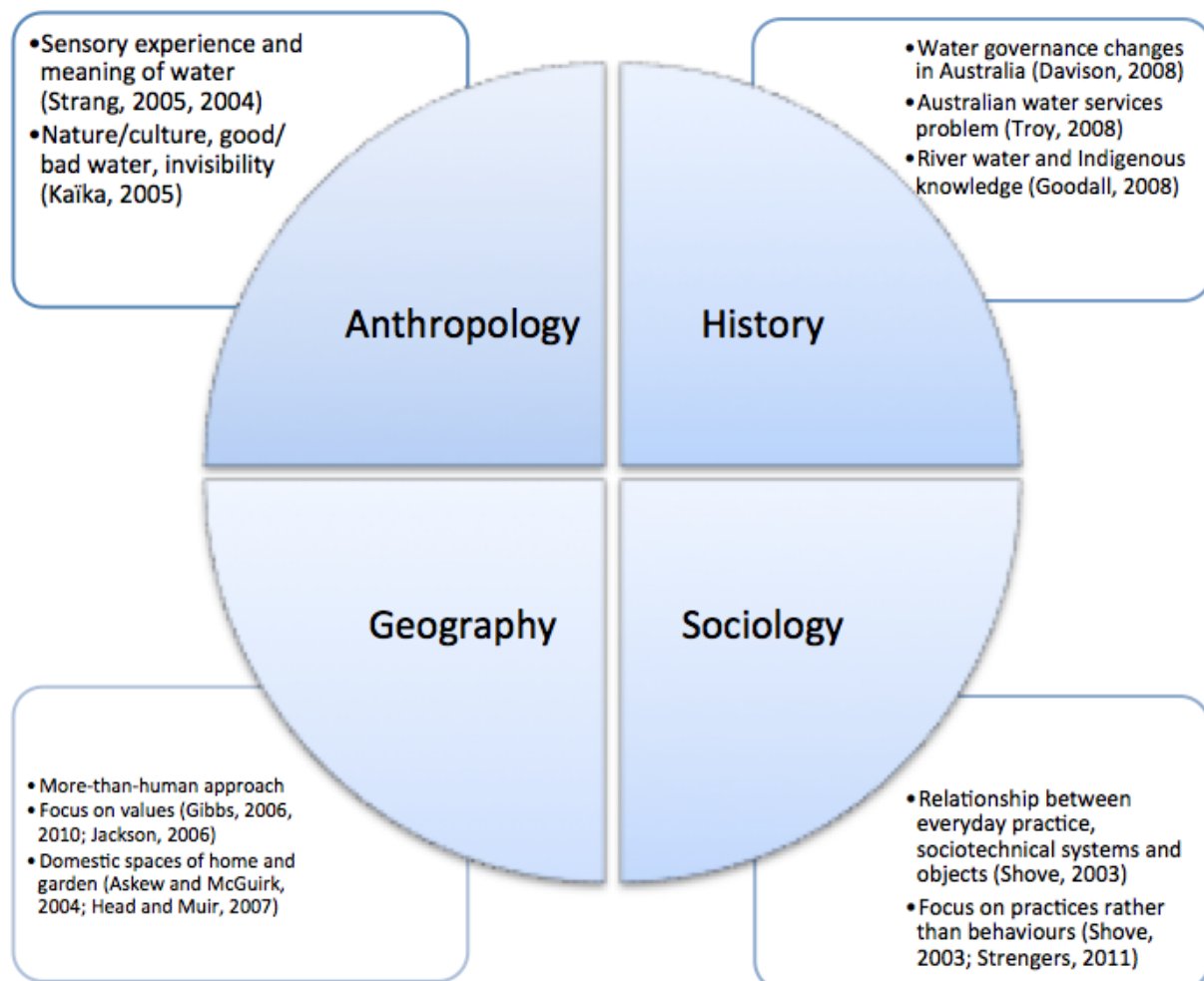


Figure 3: Disciplines of water cultures.

Strang's (2005, p.115) anthropological review reveals several major themes surrounding the meaning of water "as a matter of life or death; as a potent generative and regenerative force; as the substance of social and spiritual identity; and as a symbol of power and agency." Strang (2005) suggests that these meanings of water, although culturally specific and diverse, share commonalities that are based upon the characteristics of water (its fluidity, transmutability, and aesthetics) and shared human physiological and cognitive processes that shape experiences of the qualities of water. Another way of understanding water regards it as 'good' or 'bad', as promulgated by Kaïka (2005). Here, processed and controlled water is perceived to be 'good', whereas untreated water, such as river and rainwater, is inherently 'bad'. Kaïka (2005) argues that this dualism is underpinned by the notion that the modern home is constructed discursively and materially as a pure space, separate from nature. The denial of nature within the home is reinforced by the invisibility of water supply networks. Our engagement with water in the home is therefore structured, invisible, and in the control of systems of supply. Through an environmental historical lens, Goodall (2008) draws attention to how river water plays a critical role in both conserving and continuing Indigenous environmental knowledge and how this knowledge offers potential sustainable resource management solutions in Australia.

In geography, a more-than-human approach has been gaining prominence in cultures of water studies. The Dictionary of Human Geography (2013) defines 'more-than-human' as "A term used critically to remind human geographers that the non-human world not only exists but has causal powers and capacities of its own" (Castree et al., 2013).

In the late 1990s, Swyngedouw (1999) noted that scholars were beginning to recognise the importance of a way of thinking that did not separate natural and social processes. He considers geographer David Harvey's (1996) notion that there is nothing unnatural about cities, which illustrates how urban areas are situated in a network of processes that are simultaneously human, natural, material, cultural, mechanical, and organic. Following this thought, geographer Sarah Whatmore (2006) argues that the division of nature and culture has failed to

acknowledge the agency of non-humans, be this animals, plants, or technology. Thus, a more-than-human approach aims to rethink the complex entanglements of humans, nature and technology, giving agency to the non-human world. As Gibbs (2009) explains, more-than-human geographies move away from anthropocentric understandings of nature and towards placing non-humans at the centre of attention, and attempt to understand the world through the relationships between humans and non-humans.

Panelli (2010) provides a useful review of recent literature in social and cultural geography that explores human relations to non-humans. These include studies in animal geographies (Power, 2008), surfing (Waitt, 2008), and yoga (Lea, 2008). This research illuminates the discursive and bodily spaces in which the social values of nature and non-humans play out (Panelli, 2010). Alongside these fields of study, scholars apply the more-than-human approach to exploring cultures of water. For example, Gibbs (2006) advocates this approach when exploring the diverse ways in which water is valued. Challenging the hegemonic paradigm for valuing water, which is based upon economic valuation and the separation of nature and culture, Gibbs (2006, 2010) proposes an alternative framework, which draws upon diverse sets of knowledge including indigenous, local settler, and scientific ways of knowing the landscape. In turn, this embraces diversity, change, and complexity, emphasising the multifaceted interconnections between water, humans, and the non-human world. From a domestic perspective, Head and Muir (2007, p.901-902) give agency to water and the garden in everyday practices, conceptualising water as "a particular kind of non-human" and consider its engagements with humans: "People understand it as a cleansing and tranquil part of nature... the dynamic nature of people's engagement with it suggests that it is widely understood as part of a living nature."

2.5 Domestic Water Cultures

Until the emergence of cultural environmental research on water, the dominant approach to exploring household water consumption in

both governments and academia focused upon calculations and facts and figures (see for example, Creedy et al., 1998; Agthe and Billings, 1980). This research was underpinned by public discourses on conservation being dominated by experts in engineering, resource economics, and ecology – what sociologist Shove calls an ‘environment-centred’ enquiry (Allon & Sofoulis, 2006). This approach focused on predicting supply and demand of resources, leading to the understanding of water as a separate, measurable entity.

An environment-centred approach may be adequate when calculating water supply, but it ignores the highly diverse and complex characteristics of human relationships to natural resources (Macnaghten & Urry, 1998). Indeed, as Allon and Sofoulis (2006, p.46) assert, “effective management of water demand cannot ignore the social and cultural differences associated with different habits, expectations, meanings, and practices of water use.” In a historical account of domestic water consumption in Australia, Davison (2008) argues that cultural forces, such as understandings of bodily comfort and cleanliness, have determined our dependence on water for many household practices such as drinking, washing, flushing, and swimming.

As droughts are predicted to become more common and prolonged events (IPCC, 2007) and the possibility of permanent water shortages become a reality, water authorities began to include the management of water demand in their business, focusing on how and why people use water (Sofoulis, 2005). With this, a large body of academic literature in sociology, anthropology, and human geography has begun to move towards understanding consumption as embedded in social and cultural norms, everyday practices, and wider sociotechnical systems. Within domestic water cultures research there are a number of approaches to understanding the relationships between humans and water. This section of the literature review explores domestic water cultures from two different approaches: social practice theory and embodied, home-making practices, the latter of which provides the theoretical framework for this thesis.

2.5.1 Social Practice Theory

Based in environmental psychology, social practice theory is a response to thinking differently about behaviour in a way that focuses on attitude, knowledge, and action. Behaviour change programs structured around social practice theory are pervasive in Australia, funded mainly by governments. They form part of a discourse that Moloney and Strengers (2014) term ‘Going Green’. These programs frame social and environmental change as an individual phenomenon and hence aim to meet pro-environmental behaviour by encouraging voluntarism and providing education (Moloney & Strengers, 2014). This framework draws upon economic ‘rational choice’ and the attitudes, behaviour, choice (ABC) approach for understanding consumption. Within the ABC approach – the dominant paradigm in contemporary environmental policy (Shove, 2010) – consumers are positioned as rational actors who will consume fewer resources if they have access to incentives and information. Hence, behaviour changes when individuals adopt pro-environmental attitudes (A) and behaviours (B) and when they make different consumption choices (C). Evaluating this in a climate change policy context, Shove (2010) critiques the ABC model, proposing that it does not take into account the ‘value-action’ gap (Blake, 1999). In other words, it fails to consider that people who hold green values do not always act in accordance with them. Nor does it take into account behaviours that do not respond as ‘normal’. Indeed, Burgess et al. (2003) highlight the failure of behaviour change to achieve significant environmental and social change.

Social practice theory challenged the Going Green discourse (see Barr et al., 2011; Hargreaves, 2011; Røpke, 2009, Warde, 2005, amongst others cited in Moloney & Strengers, 2014). This theory goes beyond the behaviours of the individual and develops understandings of the wider social practices, structures, and norms that may inform resource consumption in everyday life. The primary aim of social practice theory is to bring to the fore a relational way of thinking that emphasises the importance of practices, challenging the thinking that assumes people to be rational and predictable consumers and instead regarding them as active participants. This approach for understanding

behavioural change draws upon Bourdieu's (1984) concept of habitus as a 'structuring structure' and emphasises change as part of the gradual emergence of social practice.

Sociologist Elizabeth Shove (2003) applies this theory exploring how everyday practices, such as showering and doing the laundry, are embedded in the social cultural realm. Shove (2003) draws upon concepts from actor-network theory (Law, 1987) and studies of technology and society (Bijker, 1997) to illustrate the three dimensions of co-evolution (Figure 4). This process firstly addresses the relations between technology and social practice; secondly, the relations between technology and complex sociotechnical systems; and thirdly, the relations between these systems and the practices and expectations of users (Shove, 2003). The double-headed arrows signify the mutually evolving interactions between users, objects, and larger scale systems. The co-evolutionary process can be applied to understand water consumption. Users are continually being shaped and reshaped by interactions with water, technologies and the effects of sociotechnical systems of supply. Thus, Shove's (2003) sociotechnical perspective is highly influential

in helping to understand everyday water practices. This perspective is concerned with the materialities of social life, based upon the premise that humans co-exist with non-humans, acknowledging the relations between users, technologies, and larger systems.

Considering household water consumption from this approach, Shove (2003) argues that consumption is a result of the normalised habits of comfort, cleanliness and convenience that are underpinned by cultural values and expectations of self-presentation, health, and hygiene. The main premise here is that habits and expectations of resource consumption, influenced by social and cultural dynamics, result in increased demand for energy and water. For example, modern standards of hygiene that regard dirt and sweat as unacceptable have resulted in people washing themselves and their clothes more frequently (Shove, 2003). Furthermore, Shove (2003) argues that our domestic practices and consumption are intimately linked to reproducing what we regard as our ordinary, everyday lives. Additionally, this consumption is rendered invisible as it is bound up with habit and mundane everyday routine, becoming an 'inconspicuous practice

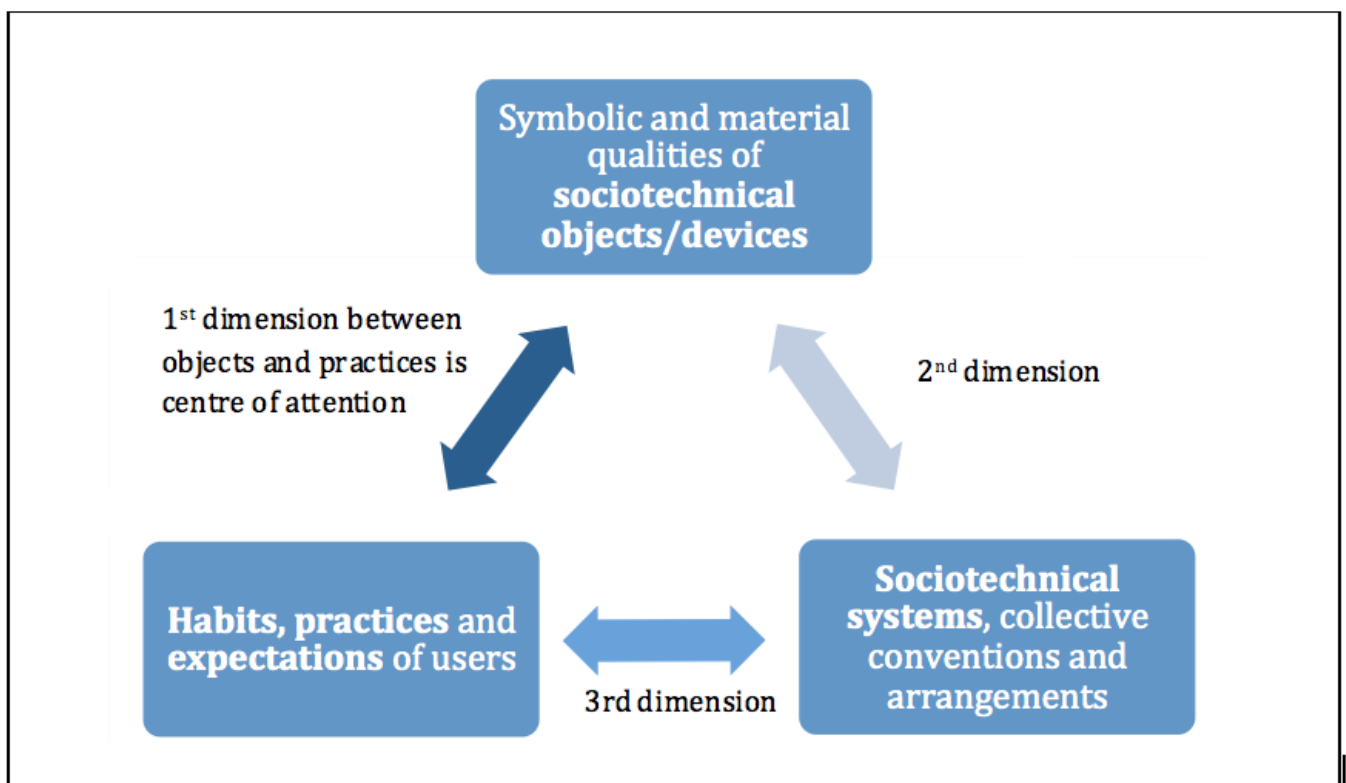


Figure 4: The three dimensions of sociotechnical co-evolution.

Adapted from Shove (2003, p.48 and 52).

of consumption'. It thus can be challenging for researchers to investigate domestic cultures of water, as the practices that make up the rhythm of everyday life involve an almost wordless 'practical consciousness' (Giddens, 1984; Tudor, 1995). Indeed, as Sofoulis (2005, p.448) questions, "Who normally entertains an attitude about a tap, a drain, or a sewage pipe?"

Similarly, Strengers advocates for moving beyond behavioural approaches to consumption. Strengers (2011) proposes an alternative paradigm to demand-management of energy and water, combining two conceptual strands of social practice theory and co-management into an approach she labels 'co-management of everyday practices'. She argues that rational choice theory, which assumes that individuals use resources in a cost-benefit scenario, overlooks the idea that choice may be embedded in (or emerge out of) the sphere of production. This production-consumption divide overlooks the social, cultural, technical, and institutional aspects of demand. By drawing upon the ideas of Reckwitz (2002), Strengers (2011) argues that practice-based conceptualisation, which understands practices as a series of interrelated and mutually reinforcing components reproduced in everyday life, is key to understanding the changing compositions of everyday practices. Social practice theory thus reflects how everyday practices are both changed and sustained through their repetitive, routine (re)production in day-to-day life.

Researchers employ the sociotechnical model as a tool to understand how water habits may be changed in more sustainable directions (Supski and Lindsay, 2013). In Australia, one of the main proponents of this perspective in cultural water research is Zoë Sofoulis (2005, 2006, 2011). Exploring everyday water values and practices in Sydney households, Sofoulis (2005) turned to Shove's conceptualisation of sociotechnical co-evolution (Figure 4). According to Sofoulis (2005), extending Shove's cultural line of enquiry to a sociotechnical approach helps to better understand discourses of water consumption. In doing so, Sofoulis (2005) characterises the technological and institutional structures in Australia as 'Big Water'. This concept refers to the dominant sociotechnical system for water supply, which includes large-scale engineering projects, dams,

pipelines, and sewage treatment plants. Sofoulis (2005) argues that these infrastructures were born out of British colonial and later white Australian nation-building processes and ideologies, with the aim to serve business interests. The task of managing water supply is the responsibility of these 'Big Water' systems. Domestic water users are therefore left with the responsibility of merely using this water in order to maintain their standards of comfort and cleanliness and as Sofoulis (2005, p.455) notes, to keep "alive the nation-building Big Water dream in their backyard oasis." This supply-user relationship is problematic as it is surrounded by delegations of responsibility and blame. The household water meter exemplifies how water supply and monitoring is the responsibility of Big Water, as the device gives no meaningful information to users about their consumption. Indeed, further research illustrates that people do not experience use of water in the number of litres that are consumed, but rather their experiences are a "habitual enjoyment of the services, technologies and experiences that water makes possible" (Allon & Sofoulis, 2006, p.47). Sofoulis (2005) proposes that these 'saver-unfriendly' devices are intentional for economic reasons, as the more water people use, the more money companies make. However, in times of 'water crisis' domestic users are suddenly blamed for this situation and are considered 'water-wasters'. Positioned as 'wasters', households are seemingly unable to make decisions on what water uses are most essential.

Geographers Lawrence and McManus (2008) examined the impacts of two sustainability lifestyle programs on water consumption in Sydney households ('The Sustainability Street' in Penrith and 'GreenHome' in Parramatta). Unlike the behavioural programs outlined previously by Moloney and Strengers (2014), Lawrence and McManus (2008, p.317) claim that "these programs are not just a one-off technological fix or an information campaign demanding changes in behaviour. They are locally implemented ... involving longer-term interaction and education." However, the results of this study suggested that despite the improved behaviour of participants in the programs, there were no significant water savings in comparison to previous behaviours or the behaviour of non-participants. This, they attribute to the behavioural barriers presented by Big Water and cultural norms

surrounding cleanliness and comfort. Thus, they agree with Shove (2003), Sofoulis (2005) and Allon and Sofoulis (2006) that movements towards less resource intensive behaviour require both changes to accepted everyday norms and technical changes to water supply infrastructure. This may include social changes to what is considered 'normal' in terms of personal cleanliness or laundering, or installing rainwater tanks and greywater recycling systems on the household scale.

Social practice theory helps to understand how domestic water is consumed and brings to light how these understandings have implications for household water savings. That said, this thesis follows the work of Lane and Gorman-Murray (2011) and Pink et al. (2012, 2013a, 2013b) and pays attention to the material and sensory knowledge of home-making practices.

2.5.2 Theoretical Framework: Home and Home-making Practices

Lane and Gorman-Murray (2011) adopt a material geography approach to explore the geographies of household sustainability. One strand of this approach considers the material dimensions of embodied experience. This theme is concerned with the fleshiness of our bodies – corporeality, performativity and embodied experience – and focuses on the relationship of self to space and society. Lane and Gorman-Murray (2011) draw on workings of feminist scholars, such as Judith Butler, to remind us that self is always embodied. This embodiment has a spatially relational nature as it is argued that we discursively and materially perform and (re)produce our bodies in particular spaces (Duncan, 1996; Longhurst, 2001; Naste & Pile, 1998). Considering this, Lane and Gorman-Murray (2011) suggest that a crucial space where embodied selves are constituted is the home. Thus, they argue, it is vital to reflect upon how geographies of the home can relate to the debates surrounding household sustainability.

Back in 1998, cultural-historical geographer Mona Domosh stated that the "home is a rich territory indeed for understanding the social and the spatial. It's just that we've barely begun to open the door and look inside." (Domosh, 1998, p.276 cited in Blunt, 2005). Since then, a large body of

research by cultural geographers, among many other scholars, has explored the concept of 'home', asking questions that at first may have appeared mundane (see Mallett (2004) for a comprehensive review of sociological work on home). In particular, geographers now pay closer attention to the home as a space for the production of subjectivities (Waitt and Gorman-Murray, 2007). Blunt and Dowling (2006) draw upon ideas proposed by post-structuralist feminist thinkers to demonstrate that home and subjectivity are not fixed, but rather (re)constituted through uneven sets of spatially located relationships. Providing a critical feminist analysis of home, they argue that:

Home is a process of creating and understanding forms of dwelling and belonging. Home is lived as well as imagined. What home means and how it is materially manifest are continually created and recreated through everyday home-making practices, which are themselves tied to the spatial imaginaries of home (p.254).

What becomes clear from this is that home is much more than just a house or household.

Feminist scholar Iris Marion Young advocated that: "The activities of homemaking thus give material support to the identity of those whose home it is. Personal identity in this sense is not fixed but always in process" (Young, 2005, p. 140). Blunt and Dowling (2006) reiterate this point and suggest that relational geographies of home require attention to home-making practices and the idea that home does not simply exist, but is made. Here, people are thought to create home through social and emotional relationships. Particularly, the authors pay attention to how the house-as-home is a space of domestic work that occurs as part of these relationships. Gender plays a pivotal role, as conventionally most domestic work is the responsibility of women. Thus, the imaginings of the ideal suburban home are embodied by familial-gender relations and the positioning of women as home-makers. Furthermore, Blunt and Dowling (2006) argue that the sets of social relationships that construct home are multi-scalar as home is recognised across body, house, neighbourhood, nation, and globe. Finally, the authors argue that the home is a spatially located

emotional experience. Feelings of both belonging and alienation that constitute the spatiality of home are created by discourse and practices surrounding conventional home spaces, facilitating some subjectivities and oppressing others (Waite and Gorman-Murray, 2007). Considering this approach, home is not understood as a static place where identity is grounded, but as a site where the complex relationship of home and identity is constantly negotiated.

Social cultural researcher Sarah Pink is interested in exploring home as constituted through material and sensory relationships. To propose her concept of home as a 'place-event', Pink (2012) draws on Massey's (2005, p.141) understanding of place as "a constellation of processes" and Ingold's (2007, 2008) argument of place as an "entanglement" of the lines of things in movement, constantly shifting and changing form. Advocating for the concept of the place-event of home, Pink (2012) argues that:

The sensory home can therefore be understood as an ecology of interrelated practice, discourses, materiality and energies through which homes and self-identities are continually co-constituted as part of the home (p.70).

Pink et al. (2013a) applied a sensory approach in order to learn more about the significance and implications of laundry practices in everyday life. This research involved touring participant's homes and discovering the activities they engage in to make their homes feel 'right', considering the sounds, smells, textures and other embodied feelings of home. In contrast to social practice theory (Shove, 2003) or notions of energy and water feedback (Strengers, 2010), Pink et al. (2013b) take an approach which foregrounds the materiality and sensory elements of home and focuses on movements, i.e. the actions, that people perform to make their home feel 'right'. In doing so, the embodied and sensory ways of knowing that inform performance and understandings of the surrounding environment can begin to be uncovered. This approach, although it acknowledges the value of a practice based approach, focuses on how practices are situated as part of a larger network of things and processes. Additionally, it pays closer attention to how these practices are always situated somewhere, and help stabilise subjectivities and places.

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined the literature surrounding cultural environmental research, household sustainability, and cultures of water that has informed this project.

To understand why it makes sense for people to use water in the way that they do, the conceptual framework that this thesis adopts follows a post-structuralist feminist approach which understands water as an embodied home-making practice, considers household relationships and pays attention to not only practices, but the reciprocal relationships between users and water. The thesis pays particular attention to the way water is used to make homes feel 'right' for their inhabitants and to how water maintains roles and responsibilities within the home.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS



3.1 Introduction

Blunt (2005) considers how a wide range of research, within and beyond geography, has begun to focus on home and domesticity. To better understand the concept of 'home' as an outcome of a combination of practices and embodied knowledge, research methodologies need to explore what people do in their houses. The aim of this chapter is to justify why a combination of qualitative methods (semi-structured interviews and home insights) to investigate the homes of first generation Burmese migrants is appropriate in order to better understand how water is used as a home-making practice.

This chapter is structured in three parts. First, the methodological challenges encountered within a cross-cultural project are discussed. Here, the ethics of conducting cross-cultural research are explored, as well as the positionality of the researcher. Second, how rigour is achieved through project design is examined. An overview is given of the two qualitative research methods employed: semi-structured interviews and home insights. Finally, an outline is provided of participant recruitment methods, sample size and participant attributes, and justification is given for the data analysis techniques.

3.2 Challenges of Cross-Cultural Research

3.2.1 Ethics

It is imperative that qualitative researchers follow ethical guidelines to produce research that is 'morally right'. In this research, ethics are addressed through formal ethical guidelines provided by the University of Wollongong (UOW), and critical reflexivity, particularly that associated with cross-cultural research. All research conducted at UOW must include a formal ethical approval application to the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). This process provides a first step for the researcher to consider their responsibilities and obligations to those involved and the implications of their research to the wider community. The ethics guideline is primarily concerned with addressing matters of privacy and confidentiality, informed consent, and harm. Before commencement of research on 25th September 2014, approval from the HREC was received (ethics number: HE14/393, Appendix A).

Questions of ethics around knowledge production are heightened when a young, white woman born in England and part of the dominant ethnic group in Australia (Anglo-Australian) investigates water as a home-making practice of a minority ethnic group. How can the research be conducted in an ethical manner that does not undermine the participants' knowledge? In Australia, this question is particularly resonant given a colonial legacy of research conducted with Indigenous Australians. Howitt and Stevens (2010) argue that a colonial research agenda has been imposed upon indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities by researchers for their own academic benefits. This

...research has objectified 'others', violated their privacy and their humanity, and promotes colonizing agendas but also the ways in which Western science and scholarship have (mis)represented non-Western, Indigenous and subaltern peoples and groups (Howitt and Stevens, 2010, p.46).

Indeed, Smith (1999, p.2) suggests that the term 'research' is intimately linked to European imperialism and colonialism and that the colonial research agenda presents a "significant site of struggle between the interests and ways of knowing of the West and the interests and ways of resisting the Other." Considering the problematic implications of carrying out research in a colonial framework, there are serious ramifications in terms of the relationship between the researcher and informants. Hence, research within this framework can result in distorted and ethnocentric findings.

According to Howitt and Stevens (2010), a post-colonial research agenda is culturally sensitive to the knowledge of minority ethnic groups. Post-colonial research requires acknowledging the power dynamics that often shape research agendas with marginalised social groups, attempting to overcome ethnocentrism and paternalism, and putting aside preconceptions. From a post-colonial perspective, research does not consider other people to be intrinsically different but culturally different and therefore respects difference as opposed to exploiting it (Howitt and Stevens, 2010). The present research adopted a post-colonial approach that appreciated cultural diversity. The project design

assured that the researcher and participants worked collaboratively to co-produce knowledge.

Two Burmese cultural liaisons (see Section 3.4.3) provided helpful guidance surrounding Burmese cultural protocols; including removing shoes when entering a home, avoiding touching anyone on the head, and wearing appropriate clothing. Nevertheless, there were still moments when understandings of what was 'appropriate' clothing may have differed and when the Western understanding that one role of a researcher is to ask a series of questions proved problematic (Box 1).

Box 1: Moments of cultural misunderstanding

Research Diary entry 29/11/2014: Also I felt at one stage during the interview conscious of my skirt being too short so I will consider what I wear more carefully next time, particularly when visiting Burmese households. Additionally, Min explained to me that it is not 'in the Burmese culture' to ask direct questions, so some people are not used to being asked many questions in an interview context. I asked him if I should reconsider how I pose the questions but he says that he does that when he translates, so it's ok. I am still concerned about this however. I do not want to feel like I am bombarding the participant with questions or asking questions in a way they feel uncomfortable about. I'm still learning a lot about the Burmese culture. All interviews (bar one) have been very positive though and I'm finding that the Burmese community are very willing to share their stories with me and even feel privileged to be part of the process.

I visited Min's relatives (cousin and aunt) in Lidcombe (Western Sydney). Met Min at the train station and was picked up by his cousin. They live in an apartment block. ... Forgot to take my shoes off until Min reminded me which was a little embarrassing.

3.2.2 Reflexivity

Social theorist Michel Foucault suggests that within qualitative research, researchers should be self-critical about their understandings of a topic and reflect upon the changes of these understandings as the research unfolds. Reflexivity refers to the process that deconstructs one's assumptions and scrutinizes one's unconscious actions (Miller Cleary, 2013). It is important in cross-cultural research to acknowledge the positionality of the researcher, which is defined by the intersections of gender, age, race and class (Maher and Tetreault, 2001), as it has the potential to bias one's epistemology. Increasingly, feminist geographers are considering their corporeal positionality, reflecting upon their body-space relations such as smells, tastes, gestures, clothing and touches and how their embodied subjectivities inform the research process (Longhurst et al. 2008).

Advocating for reflexivity in feminist research, England (1994, p.82) argues that the conscious scrutiny of one's self is "critical to the conduct of fieldwork; it induces self-discovery and can lead to insights and new hypotheses about the research questions." Indeed, as geographers attempt to represent others, they do so through their own words, knowledge, experience and power (Winchester, 1996). Thus, the positionality of the researcher must be acknowledged. Being aware of my changing subjectivity in this research began with a critical investigation into the ways water is employed in my own home-making practices and the encounters I experienced with water after migration to Australia from England (Box 2). Considering my own everyday practices is important for this project in a number of ways. First, reflexivity provides clues to how my own sense of self in relationship to the space of home is configured through how water is enlisted in home-making practices. Second, reflexivity is crucial in thinking about the reciprocal relationships between the researcher and the project, as I shaped the research and the research simultaneously shaped me. Third, reflexivity is crucial to the co-production of knowledge. A reflexive statement discussing how the project has shaped the researcher is included in Chapter 10.

Within this cross-cultural research it is essential to acknowledge the multiple identities of participants.

At the same time, awareness of the diversity within the people of Burma to avoid homogenizing participants is important (Miller Cleary, 2013).

Communication is often one of the most challenging aspects of cross-cultural research and ideas are often distorted between cultures (Hurn & Tomalin, 2013). Researchers are faced with differences in spoken languages, body language and behaviours (Hurn & Tomalin, 2013). Although English is becoming

a universal language, there are considerable differences between native speakers and those who speak English as a second language. It is thus imperative to pay attention to speed, accent, volume, timing and silences in cross-cultural communication (Hurn & Tomalin, 2013). This was particularly important in this research given the English language capabilities of participants and translators.

Box 2: Positionality Statement: How do I shape the project?

My personal experiences, alongside my ethnicity, age, and gender both influence the project and explain how I am positioned within the project. I am a young Caucasian female with a tertiary education. I was born in England and migrated to Australia three years ago.

Prior to commencing this project, I had given little attention to the role of water in home-making practices. However, that's not to say that I disregarded my domestic water consumption. I thought about water in two ways: environmentally and economically. This is due to firstly, my educational background in Environmental Science and thus my understanding of the consequences of water 'wasting', and secondly, my financial situation as a student living in shared houses.

My initial research into water cultures literature allowed me to reflect upon my own experiences and ideas about household water. Growing up in England, I believe my own water culture to be slightly different to that of other Australians my age. Living up to its stereotype, I remember England as being very wet. When a rare hosepipe ban would be put in place during a dry summer, it would seem very strange, almost a joke. In contrast, I have learnt through personal experience whilst living in Australia that Australians take water restrictions very seriously, for example with neighbours policing each other's water usage. Since migrating to Australia, I have noticed a few things that are different when it comes to household water. For example, the idea of a 'laundry room' seems strange to me as in England, most washing machines are located in the kitchen, not in their own separate room, sometimes even outside. Additionally, the use of dual flushing toilets is different as is the design of showers. After speaking to friends who grew up in rural NSW, I can begin to understand how an ethic of saving water is ingrained into those who did not always have access to a mains water supply, and had to rely on rainwater tanks. As I have never lived without mains (town) water, I find this concept of relying on another source very unfamiliar. The only experience I have had in this context was when I travelled south-east Asia and avoided drinking the local tap water and bought bottled water instead, or when camping and having to collect water from an outside tap.

Researching the Burmese community was not something that I had planned to do. Yet, after undertaking preliminary research, I felt that the inclusion of a minority group in the household sustainability field was very important. Given the cross-cultural nature of this research, it is pertinent to consider my ethnicity. Living in England and Australia I have had (to my knowledge) zero contact with anyone from Burma, thus it is difficult to know what to expect going into this project. Seeing as I know very little about Burmese culture and can speak no Burmese, I am slightly apprehensive about participant recruitment and interviewing. How will I gain access to the Burmese community in Australia when I am not Burmese, and do not know anyone who is?

3.3 Establishing Rigour in Qualitative Research

Ensuring rigour in qualitative research means establishing the trustworthiness of our work (Baxter & Eyles, 1997). Indeed, Bradshaw and Stratford (2005) add that our participants and interpretive communities check our work for credibility and good practice – trust is not assumed but has to be earned. When conducting research, rigour must be considered from the outset and therefore must underpin the early stages of research design (Bradshaw & Stratford, 2005). Lincoln and Guba (1985) provide four criteria for evaluating qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (see Appendix B for how rigour was achieved in this project).

3.3.1 Mixed Methods Approach

A mixed methods qualitative research design was implemented to explore water as a home-making practice. A mixed methods approach helps to ensure rigour in a number of different ways including; triangulation (Baxter & Eyles, 1997), building trust that blurs the categories of researcher and researched, facilitating ‘deep’ ethnographic research, and generating different types of knowledge production. This is evident in previous research. For example, Pink et al. (2013) used a mixed methods approach as part of sensory ethnography in their research focusing on domestic energy efficiency.

3.3.2 ‘Talking Water’ - the Semi-Structured Interview

The semi-structured interview, ‘Talking Water’, was the starting point to explore how participants make use of water as a home-making practice. The aim of ‘Talking Water’ was to provide insights into how participants understood water over their life-course. As Kitchin and Tate (2000) point out, interviewing is the most commonly used qualitative technique in human geography. However, it is important to note that there is more to interviewing than merely having conversations with people. Valentine (2005, p.111) describes how interviews are “sensitive and people-orientated, allowing interviewees to construct their own accounts of their experiences by describing and explaining their lives in their own words.”

A pilot interview was conducted prior to the interviewing process. This allowed feedback on

the researcher’s interview rapport and demeanour, the identification of any potential issues with the schedule and for redefinition of the questions as needed. As Dunn (2005) argues, achieving rapport can be critical to the success of an interview. During the scoping phase of the project a person of Burmese ancestry was invited to comment on the interview schedule in order to determine whether the wording made sense around the categories of water, and that the line of questioning would follow cultural protocols.

To assist participants in telling their water narratives, the interview was divided into two sections. The first section focused on three themes: living in Burma, migrating to Australia, and making Australia home. The aim of this section was to understand the participant’s story and thus gain a more nuanced understanding of their narratives about water as a home-making practice over a life-course.

The second section explored different household water practices including drinking water, washing-up, showering/bathing, laundry, toilets, and gardening. In this section participants were asked to explain their everyday routines and who held responsibility for doing household chores involving water (see Appendix F for interview schedule). The aim of this section was to understand the different ways in which domestic water is enrolled to make home.

‘Talking Water’ did not aim to achieve a ‘shared experience’ between the researcher and informant. Rather, it attempted to explore and gain insights into the differences surrounding biography, gender, class, culture, and body that arose. The interviews aimed to be more than just a reciprocal relationship between the researcher and informant, hoping to provide space for a collaborative process of knowledge production. In this research, co-production of knowledge was deemed successful in some cases given the sharing of stories and experiences between the researcher and the participants. However, it is important to note that in other cases, language and cultural barriers diminished the ability of the interview to co-produce knowledge.

The interviews were audio-recorded. The use of a digital recorder produces a more accurate and

detailed account of the conversation (Valentine, 2005) and allows the researcher to be more attentive to the participant's responses (Dunn, 2005).

There are many advantages of using interviews to collect qualitative data. Respondents are able to explain the complexities and contradictions of their experiences (Bryman, 1988) and raise issues that the researcher may have overlooked (Silverman, 2000). Hence, the data produced is rich, detailed and multi-layered (Burgess, 1984). Furthermore, the open-ended semi-structured interview means that the researcher has the flexibility to determine how the interview will proceed and can add extra questions for verification and clarification of any ambiguous points made.

However, even conducting an interview with a translator, language barriers sometimes restricted depth of insights shared. Furthermore, over the course of the interviews it became clear that talking about the more intimate practices of everyday life, such as using toilets and stories about illness from untreated drinking water, were deemed to be a taboo subject. Indeed, as Young (1990) and Longhurst (2001) inform us, bodily fluids are often understood as a 'dirty topic'. Thus, the information that was received from participants surrounding these topics was limited. Improving these insights would involve building a higher level of rapport and trust between the researcher and the informant (Waitt, 2014).

3.3.3 *'Doing Water'- Home Insights*

Despite the advantages of conducting interviews, in this research context, the process of actually talking about these mundane aspects of everyday life can be challenging for participants. As Sofoulis (2005, p.448) points out, "The problem with researching – or transforming – everyday water use is precisely its everydayness; so normal it retreats into the background of awareness as part of inconspicuous consumption". To address this issue, the second stage of the project, 'Doing Water', allowed the participants to show, rather than to just tell, how they make, or seek to make, rooms in their home feel 'right' through the use of water. The aim of this was to develop a better understanding of the participant's relationship to the house as home and reveal more about their water practices from things that they may have forgotten in the interview. Home

insights involved visiting rooms in the house where water was used, such as kitchens, bathrooms, and laundries. In these rooms, the interviewer asked questions about why the room was the way it was, what things had been changed in the room and why, and what changes they wish to make in the room (Appendix G). Participants were also asked to re-enact everyday routines, such as washing the dishes.

Home tours were appropriate for this task because they provided insights into the roles and responsibilities surrounding water in the home and provided understandings into what people actually do. Given that talking about the mundane details of everyday life can often be difficult, the re-enactment of water routines was especially important in order to access this situated knowledge. 'Doing Water' allowed access to the embodied knowledge and sensuous dimensions of water in home-making practices, such as drinking and showering. However, despite these strengths, one outcome of the research process was that the interviews provided more detailed material compared to the home insights. It was at this stage of data collection that the researcher became most aware of the difficulties of cross-cultural research. Even with participants showing the researcher their everyday practices and the assistance of a translator, participants sometimes found it challenging to find words to convey both reasons for and sensory knowledge about their everyday practices.

3.4 Participant Recruitment

A total of 16 participants (11 households) contributed to this research. This research does not aim to be representative of all Burmese migrant households but instead focuses on the analysis of meanings in specific contexts (Bradshaw & Stratford, 2010). This section explores participant selection criteria, recruitment strategies, cultural liaison assistance and participant attributes.

3.4.1 *Participant Selection Criteria and Recruitment Strategies*

The strategies used to recruit participants were reflective of the project aim and research questions. Participants were required to meet three selection

criteria:

- Participants must identify as being of Burmese ethnicity and live in Australia.
- Participants must be first generation migrants.
- Participants must be an adult member of the household (over 18 years old), for ethical reasons.

Participant recruitment for a project on first generation Burmese migrants posed a unique set of challenges, particularly given the researcher's positionality as a young female of English/Australian background who spoke no Burmese. How would targeted members of the Burmese community be invited to participate? How would the differences in cultural communication be negotiated? Despite being mindful of cross-cultural research skills, there were occasions where cultural differences appeared in the recruitment process. Box 3 provides an example of when the researcher was particularly aware of her 'whiteness' in email correspondence.

Recruitment occurred through three strategies: contacting Burmese community organisations (Appendix H), using social networks known to the researcher, and through the appointment of cultural liaison assistants. Out of these strategies, the recruitment of participants through the cultural liaisons proved most successful, with 11 interviews arranged via this method. This was the most successful technique as the assistants were able to invite their friends and family to participate, who may have been more willing to do so knowing about the involvement of another member of the Burmese community. A further two participants were recruited through personal connections of the researcher's supervisor. Snowballing helped to add an additional two participants to the research. One participant was recruited via a targeted email

to a university Buddhist association, which was forwarded to its members.

3.4.2 Cultural Liaison Assistance

To address recruitment challenges in the project due to the positionality of the researcher, it was integral to recruit the assistance of Burmese cultural liaisons. Initially, Min, based in Sydney, assisted as a cultural liaison, helping to arrange interviews and provide translation. However, as the data collection progressed, it was understood that Min's ethnicity and affluent background reflected the attributes of the participants he was recruiting. Thus, in order to appreciate the ethnic diversity in Burma, to include those of lower socio-economic status and to include the voices of refugees, a second participant, Mya, based in Wollongong, provided assistance. At one stage when neither cultural liaison assistants were available, interpretation was facilitated by a family member (Tin provided translation for her older Aunt, May).

Although the cultural liaison assistants were essential to the recruitment success and interviewing of the participants (10 out of the 16 participants required translation), it is important to note the associated limitations. Firstly, there are questions surrounding possible mistranslation and loss of personal impact (Hurn & Tomalin, 2013). Additionally, there were times during interviewing where the researcher felt that the interpreter's own ideas were conveyed more strongly than the ideas of the participants (Box 4). Furthermore, interview situations where translation was required tended to be more rigid and formal, rather than relaxed. Answers given were shorter and conversations during these interviews sometimes did not flow as well compared to those interviews where translation was not required.

Box 3: Becoming aware of 'whiteness'

Research Diary extract 24/9/14: I am currently in email correspondence with the chairperson of the Burmese Welfare Community Group in Auburn. ... [The chairperson] used Burmese greeting "Mingalabah" and "Warm metta" as the sign off. I am struck whether I should also use these terms in emails? Or would that sound strange coming from a Westerner? Decided to greet him with "Mingalabah" in my reply to be polite. Though would this have been culturally inappropriate? The awkwardness of cross-cultural research and correspondence.

Box 4: Translator concerns

Research Diary extract 15/11/2014: Tin helped with translation. I felt that Tin may have been putting her ideas through more so than May's at this point. However, it also meant that Tin could add things that she had forgotten to say in her interview. The advantages and disadvantages of interpreters come across here.

29/11/2014: Again, felt that maybe Min's ideas were being put across as well as Myint's which makes me wish I could speak Burmese and know 100% what is being said!

3.4.3 Participant Attributes

Effort was made to represent diversity in the sample, paying attention to age, gender, ethnicity, visa status, and time spent living in Australia. Due to the different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds of the cultural liaison assistants, participants with a diverse range of backgrounds were interviewed (Table 2). Within the sample there was diversity of age, eight participants were 20-40 years of age, five were 40-60 years of age and three were over 60 years of age. Six participants spoke English well whereas 10 required translation. Nine participants had lived in Australia for less than five years, and seven for more than five years. This allowed for the exploration of how water practices may change from arrival to settlement. Eight participants lived in Sydney, five in Wollongong and three in Nowra. Out of these, nine rented and five owned their homes (with an elderly couple living in their son's owned house). Six participants were men and 10 were women. In terms of ethnicity, six participants identified as Burmese, three as Chin, two as Karen, one as Shan, one as Shan-Burmese and one as Chinese-Burmese. Two participants did not reveal their ethnicity.

3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1 Discourse and narrative analysis

Data was interpreted through discourse and narrative analysis. Discourse analysis applies Foucault's (1972) concept of 'discourse', which is explained through all meaningful texts that have effects on the world, groups of statements that share a common theme, and rules and structures that govern these unified statements (Waitt, 2010). Foucault's constructionist definitions of discourse

revolve around the production and circulation of knowledge (Waitt, 2010). Therefore, Foucauldian discourse analysis aims to understand the social mechanisms that maintain how people, place, and things are governed by particular rules of validity. Following the strategies outlined by Waitt (2010) (Table 3), data analysis focused on how participants spoke about their everyday practices involving water, revealing the role of water as a home-making practice.

Narrative analysis aims to interpret and understand the complex meanings revealed in interviews, and the connections between them (Wiles et al., 2005). Attention is paid to how stories are embedded in the meanings and evaluations of the informant and their social context (Wiles et al., 2005). Narrative analysis is particularly useful for the exploration into the dynamics of everyday life, thus justifying its use in this project. Fraser (2004) provides a useful framework for conducting narrative research. Table 4 provides an outline of this framework and examples of how this technique was employed.

3.5.2 Vignettes

Rather than exploring the patterns across qualitative data, a vignette style approach focuses upon the narratives of specific individuals. Vignettes require a detailed understanding of whole transcripts in order to provide a deeper understanding of lived experiences and personal geographies (see Valentine, 2000; Bailey, 2009; Waitt and Gorman-Murray, 2011). The following vignette chapters provide in-depth discussions of the narratives of four participants. The vignettes aimed to reflect the diversity within the sample, and did so in terms of gender and age. However, it became evident that the most insightful and rich narratives were provided by participants who did not require translation, often those who

Table 2: Participant attribute table

Participant name	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Location	Household occupancy	Household structure	Occupation	Visa	Years living in Australia	Required translator?
Min	28	Male	Burmese	Macquarie, Sydney	Rent	Student share house	Student	Student	2	No
Tin	30s	Female	Burmese	Ermington, Sydney	Own	Family (brother)	Student/ nurse	Student	7	No
May	40s	Female	Burmese	Granville, Sydney	Rent	Couple with children	-	Family	10	Yes
Kyi Kyi	70s	Female	Burmese	Nowra	-	Family (son's house)	Retired	Family	2	Yes
Nyan	70s	Male	Burmese	Nowra	-	Family (son's house)	Retired	Family	2	Yes
Min Zaw	Late 30s	Male	-	Nowra	Own	Couple with children and extended family	Student	Family	4	No
Tin Theik	29	Male	-	Lidcombe, Sydney	Own	Family (parent's house)	Chef	Family	10	No
Myint	50s	Female	Shan-Burmese	Lidcombe, Sydney	Own	Couple with children and extended family	-	Family	5	Yes
Pone	40s	Male	Shan	Lidcombe, Sydney	Own	Family (sister's house)	-	Family	5	Yes
Mya (pseudonym)	Late 30s	Female	Chin	Wollongong	Rent	Couple with children	Translator/ studying child care	Refugee	1.5	No
Rudy	28	Female	Chin	Wollongong	Rent	Couple with children	Studying English	Refugee	2.5	Yes
Permetoe	32	Female	Karen	Wollongong	Rent	Single	-	Refugee	1.5	Yes
Na Mu Nya	60s	Female	Karen	Wollongong	Rent	Couple with extended family	-	Refugee	1.5	Yes
Sui	Early 40s	Female	Chin	Wollongong	Rent	Couple with children	-	Refugee	5	Yes
April	22	Female	Chinese-Burmese	Artarmon, Sydney	Rent	Student share house	Student	Student	2	Yes
Kyaw Zaw	40s	Male	Burmese	Lidcombe, Sydney	Rent	Couple with children	Taxi driver	Refugee	15	No

were more educated (Box 5). This again points to the challenges associated with cross-cultural research the researcher's positionality. However, Chapters 8 and 9 consider the narratives of all participants, including insights from those who did require translation. Additionally, the vignette characters were biased in terms of ethnicity. Three out of the four identified as being part of the dominant Burmese ethnicity, with one identifying as Chin. Interviews with minority ethnic group members, particular Chin, were often less rich in description compared to those from majority ethnic groups. This may be due to the cultural customs of Chin people, such as avoiding eye contact, and language barriers that diminished the quality of the interview itself.

Table 3: Strategies for Discourse Analysis

Strategies for Discourse Analysis	Examples
Choice of texts	Reading transcripts to identify most insightful and rich interviews.
Suspend pre-existing categories: reflexivity	Becoming self-critical about researcher's understanding of everyday domestic water, and reflecting upon the changes in these understandings as the research unfolds (see Boxes 2 and 6).
Familiarisation	Understanding how discourses emerging from the transcripts are embedded within social networks. Transcripts as written representations of audio-recorded interview that occurred within cross-cultural qualitative research.
Coding	Coding transcripts for organisation and again for interpretation.
Effects of 'Truths'	Investigating transcripts for effects of 'truths' about understandings of domestic water e.g. best method of showering, best water for drinking.
Inconsistencies	Investigating transcripts for contesting 'truths' about domestic water practices.
Silences	Paying attention to what is not being said by informants, e.g. toilet practices.

3.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter justifies the research methods used to explore water as a home-making practice for Burmese migrant households. A qualitative mixed methods approach ensured that rigour was achieved through semi-structured interviews to explore participants' understandings and lived experiences. Home insights sought to explore participants' embodied knowledge surrounding their mundane everyday practices involving domestic water. Discourse analysis was used to explore the sets of ideas employed to categorise domestic water, and narrative analysis to remain mindful of how emotions, meanings, and experiences are always spatially situated. The next chapters present results that pay attention to emergent themes for individual participants as well as across participants.

Table 4: Strategies for Narrative Analysis

Phases of Narrative Analysis	Examples
Hearing the stories, experiencing each other's emotions	Conducted semi-structured interviews and listening to audio recordings.
Transcribing the material	More than 50% of interview material transcribed by the researcher enabled the researcher to fully understand stories.
Interpreting individual transcripts	Identified stories and contradictions.
Scanning across different domains of experience	Explored intrapersonal (self-talk, confessions) and interpersonal experiences (talking about practices of others), cultural aspects (common sense understandings e.g. Burmese water festival) and structural aspects (references to class, gender, ethnicity).
Linking 'the personal with the political'	Recognised references made to popular discourses (e.g. health and hygiene).
Looking for commonalities and differences among participants	Examined transcripts for similarities and differences between participants and explored patterns.
Writing academic narratives about personal stories	Understanding there is no 'right' knowledge but multiple possibilities for representing Burmese migrants' stories.

Box 5: Language barrier concerns

Research Diary extract 29/11/14: Finding it hard to build rapport with participants in the interviews who cannot speak English. However, as Min is such a great research assistant the interview never feels awkward. I feel the interviews where the participants can speak English are much more relaxed though, more like a conversation than an interview.

CHAPTER FOUR

*MIN: INTIMATE WATER, SENSORY WATER
AND SAVING WATER*



Min, 28, is a student at Macquarie University in Sydney. Having arrived in Sydney from Singapore two years ago, Min lives in a rented share house in Marsfield. Unlike many recent Burmese migrants to Australia arriving through humanitarian visas (see Section 1.4.2), Min arrived on a student visa to further his education. Although Min had lived in Singapore since he was 17 to study, he grew up in Yangon, the former capital and the most populated city in Burma, with his parents and elder brother. Min's family of dominant Burmese ethnicity are relatively affluent and employ maids and kitchen helpers to do household chores. Given Min's educated and wealthy background, he has not experienced many of the hardships of Burma's rural, poorer population. However, that is not to say that he is naïve about water scarcity problems. Min practices Buddhism and regularly volunteers at a Buddhist temple in Penrith. This vignette will explore Min's showering and drinking practices and his reciprocal relationship with water.

The Touch of Water: Scooping versus Showering

For Min, "Water is essentially life" (his own words), referring to a Burmese proverb, "*Htamin a-thet khoona yet, yay a-thet ta ma-net*", which translates as, 'it is possible to survive for seven days without food (rice), but one day without water is fatal'. This represents the most obvious human relationship with water, that consuming it is integral to our survival. Individuals are confronted with the physical need for water every day, most notably for drinking, but also for many other practices that constitute everyday life, such as cooking, washing, flushing, and cleaning. However, we have learnt that human relationships with water extend much further than the physical need of it for our continued existence. We not only know water through its physical function, but also through our sensory bodies, through taste, touch, and smell (Strang, 2005). This is especially true for Min in terms of his physical bodily contact with water. Washing his body is an important routine for Min. He describes the 'Burmese way' of washing oneself, '*yay laung*', which literally translates as 'watering (something)'. For Min, when he lived in Yangon, *yay laung* involved collecting tap water provided through government pipelines in a bucket, transferring this

to a tank located in the inside bathroom and using a smaller bucket to scoop this water onto his body. Following Min's advice, 'scooping' is the most appropriate English word to describe this method, and will hence-forth be used in this thesis to refer to *yay laung*. The way in which Min uses multiple vessels in his Burmese washing routine – from pipe, to tap, to bucket, to tank, to scoop – contrasts with the invisible systems of supply that Sofoulis (2005) describes in Australia. Although Big Water may still be a part of scooping routines in urban areas of Burma, in terms of supplying water to the household through government pipes, water is much more visible, being poured, carried, scooped and splashed. Thus, as opposed to invisible water networks and showering technologies in Australia supporting practices of 'inconspicuous consumption' (Shove, 2003), and demeaning attitudes and opinions towards water use, the practice of scooping results in water being much more visible, evoking strong meanings and relationships between water and users. This may help to explain why Min believes that water should be saved as much as possible because he has developed a strong relationship with water, due to his experiences of access and supply growing up in Burma.

When discussing scooping, Min describes how the splashing of water is soaked into and almost ingested into his body:

Min: ... It's like, you can feel that the water goes into your body and you feel fresh!

Louisa: Yeah, really?

Min: Cos like drinking water for your skin!

The intimate, sensory experience of scooping highlights the pleasure that Min receives from water, enabling him to feel fresh. Describing how his skin 'drinks' the water emphasises his perceived need to make bodily contact with a large amount of water in order to feel fresh. The importance of this bodily sensation is reiterated when Min explains how he sometimes takes baths now that he lives in Australia, a practice that he would never do in Burma. Min takes baths so that he can, in his words, "contact my body with a lot of water". He believes that he can no longer wash by scooping and sometimes finds the Australian shower insufficient as it fails to provide enough water to make him feel fresh.

The water that Min washed with in Burma was cold. This is partly to do with the fact that instant hot water is not provided to most households in Burma, but also it is something that Min enjoyed as it provided refreshing relief from the Burmese heat. Min prefers washing his body with cold water rather than using warm water, identifying scooping as an aspect of Burmese life that he misses. Min's rationale for washing his body is less about removing dirt and sweat, nor about the production and presentation of self (as Shove, 2003, has argued), but lies in ideas of freshness and removing heat from his body. Scooping relieves Min's body from heat, whereas showering in Australia does not provide the same bodily response, 'affecting' his body in a negative way as opposed to relieving it.

Min: And also because, weather is hot right? So you can really feel your body heat. So one, we scoop from here, left side, left leg and then the right leg, left body, right arms and then from the head. So like, the heat comes off slowly and out of your body.

Louisa: So, is it like, almost a ritual, cleaning yourself?

Min: Yeah, a lot of water so the heat... Whereas if you just shower here the heat is hidden somewhere and it affects your body.

Living in Australia, Min believes that he has "no choice" but to use the Western style shower. Although he no longer practices scooping – in his words it is "impossible" – Min continues to wash the left side of his body first and then the right, by moving his body manually towards the water flow. Min has incorporated an aspect of scooping into his everyday routine living in Sydney, in order to feel more comfortable and maintain his house as home. Instead of investing in scoops or buckets to continue his Burmese practice, like other participants interviewed (see Chapters 6 and 9), Min has modified his practice to his new home environment.

Min desires to make changes to the bathroom in order to make the space feel 'right'. These changes include removing the bathtub to make the shower larger so that it would be more comfortable to move around in. He also wishes to make his bathroom more comfortable for his visiting mother, by adding a hose to the toilet for personal hygiene, suggesting

the generational and gendered attributes of this domestic space.

Min: I might remove the tub-- what is it called-- bathtub. Then I might expand the shower. It's too small for me. Too fat. It's difficult. Bathtub maybe I would buy portable so when you want to spread it just inflate it or something. I will add the water hose [for the toilet]; maybe it's easier for ladies as well like my mum. Sometimes just need to wash the feet. It's easier with the hose.

He is, however, unable to make these changes as he lives in a rented, shared property. The constraints of Min's student lifestyle and related living situation limit his ability to maintain a sense of home by making changes to allow these domestic spaces feel 'right'.

Following Pink et al. (2013) and considering how Min washes his body in a way that foregrounds the sensory and embodied practices and movements that are performed at home illustrates the role of water as a home-making practice. Water and the practice of showering help to inform not only Min's sense of self, but also sense of the space of home as a student share house, due to the limitations that Min faces in being able to wash in a way that feels most 'right'.

Sensing Drinking Water

In the affluent area of Yangon where Min grew up, water was supplied to households through government pipelines. Yet, even in these wealthier areas, water supply disruptions were common. Hence, like most households, the family had a private well in the garden which supplied them with water during shortages. Min describes how the supplied tap water was sometimes a reddish or yellowish colour and was therefore understood as unclean and was distrusted. Water was treated at home by boiling or through a water filtration system to remove any "harmful bacteria". Min is particularly concerned about the health effects of untreated water, as he says, "if the water is impure it can harm your skin, rashes et cetera." Interestingly, Min and his family questioned the quality of tap water in Burma for drinking, even after it had been treated.

Min: But even for the drinking water we use, what we believe is however you clean the [tap] water to drink, drinking purification, we still not comfortable drinking that.

Therefore, Min's family opted to access their drinking water by purchasing large bottles of water when this option became available.

Min: After that, we find that the water, we can feel it you know, you know sometimes you can see that the water is not clean, you know. So, when the water bottles came we start buying the water bottles.

Min's sensory knowledge of tap water, through feeling it and seeing it as unclean, explains his concern with it being untreated. This concern is based largely on knowledge of the risk of falling ill from water-borne disease. In Australia, however, Min trusts drinking water directly from the tap. Although he no longer has the fear of becoming ill, Min describes the taste of Australian water as "strange" and "perhaps chemically". He is especially concerned with the taste of tap water at his university, hence his apprehension about drinking it.

Min: ... You should visit our school as well. Sometimes it's [the tap] so old you can smell corrosion.

Louisa: Like rust.

Min: I do mind that. I can taste the difference. It's corrosion right, you can see it's corroded on the surface.

Min's embodied knowledge of the taste of water enables him to understand what water is acceptable for drinking. Although Min primarily accesses his drinking water in Australia from the tap, he does state that he finds bottled water "fresher". Additionally, when providing a drink to a guest visiting his home, Min would offer them bottled water rather than tap water.

Saving Water: a Reciprocal Relationship

Min is "very conscious of water", and believes that saving water is very important. Having experienced living in a shared house in Australia, Min has learnt that not everyone holds this same value. Thus, water

can become a source of conflict in the house when Min observes the practices of others.

Louisa: In your home now, in your share house in Australia, is water ever a source of conflict in the house?

Min: ... Yeah. And there was this one time I complained to the owner, they [housemates] use the washing machine so much. Every day, one in a day they all use it like four times, that's ridiculous. They must be washing unnecessarily.

Indeed, when asked if he thought that his water use practices were different or similar to other Australians, Min replied that,

...they [housemates] waste water by washing so much, doing laundry so much, you know? And I see people with the tap on for a few seconds, ten seconds, and I don't feel good about that.

Furthermore,

I see people open the water taps not using like washing the vegetables and they use a lot of water unnecessarily, I feel a bit angry because in our country's experience water is so sacred and they are using abundantly without saving.

Although it has been found that practices sometimes do not reflect 'green' values (Blake, 1999), in this case Min is fairly pro-active in saving. For example, Min emailed the owner of the property to express his concern about his housemates' 'unnecessary' use of the washing machine. Additionally, he informed the landlord that the flow rate of the kitchen tap was too high, resulting in the installation of a filter that limits the flow rate. Min is particularly concerned about water wastage when it is leaking and takes action to fix these watery parts of the house.

... I'm very conscious of water sometimes, even the toilet. Sometimes the water is dripping – that's because if you observe the water tank, the flushing toilet, the bowl is not working properly so the water just drips. Also some shower taps, it's not properly closed so it drips. I find that it needs to be changed.

In doing so, Min illustrates his strong reciprocal relationship with water. By caring for water and limiting waste, he is simultaneously caring for himself as he has a strong sense of identity built around water, based on his childhood experiences growing up in Burma and his understanding of water as “sacred”. Unlike his housemates, when Min observes taps dripping, he feels ‘bad’ and has a sense of responsibility to water to save it. This responsibility may be underpinned by an environmental discourse, judging by Min’s educated background, or may be more about his experiences growing up in Burma and being aware of the water scarcity problems that the poorer majority of the population face. Additionally, his desire to save water may also align with his concerns about paying water bills, a reflection of his employment status as a student.

Although washing-up the dishes was not Min’s responsibility in Burma due to the help of maids, Min’s washing-up routine now in Australia focuses on the idea of saving water. Instead of filling up the sink and leaving dishes to soak in hot water and then washing them, a practice that Min regards as ‘Western’, Min washes each item individually with cold water and turns the tap on and off between dishes, a technique he believes saves water. Min regards the sink as “dirty” as it is a space used to wash and becomes filled with food remnants. Min feels very strongly about the idea of leaving the tap on.

Min: ... I hate people that leave the tap open, I can’t take it.

Louisa: Do you find that a lot of people leave the tap running?

Min: Some people. Sometimes the way they wash is not up to my standard. They don’t use the water efficiently.

As discussed throughout his everyday practices, Min places a high value on water. This is also illustrated through his practice of throwing away plastic food containers, rather than washing and recycling them.

Min: ... Plastic container you know right. After I cool down then I leave it there. Then sometimes I don’t recycle it because recycle you have to wash again and then the container is already dirty so I’d rather throw it away.

Some people recycle, I can’t.

Negotiating this dilemma, Min decides that saving water is more important than recycling plastic.

Chapter Summary

Through exploring Min’s everyday practices, the role of water in (re)shaping his sense of self and home is revealed. Min’s scooping practices highlight the importance of the material and sensory qualities of water, and how these invoke feelings of ‘freshness’, rather than cleanliness or relaxation. Scooping results in a much more intimate connection with water compared to the experiences of Big Water consumption. The material environment of the Australian shower presents constraints in terms of Min being able to wash himself in a way that makes him feel most right. Min’s drinking water practices reveal how water quality is understood through embodied sensory knowledge. Lastly, Min’s reciprocal relationship with water is demonstrated through his water saving practices, as saving water is known as an obligation to caring for the self. In summary, Min’s everyday practices, particularly drinking and showering, reveal how he attempts to sustain his shared household as home and sense of self.

CHAPTER FIVE

*TIN: TRUSTED WATER, WASTE WATER
AND INTIMATE WATER*



Tin is in her early 30s and migrated to Australia some seven years ago to live with her brother and study nursing. The two own a house in Ermington, having moved from a rented house in Macquarie Park in northern Sydney two years ago. Their mother frequently visits from Burma for periods of up to six months. Tin's family has a wealthy background in Burma, where her father was employed as a government official. Tin was highly educated before migrating, studying economics at a university in Yangon and working as an accountant. Spending much of her childhood in Chin State, Tin experienced water shortages and has attributed this to making her more conscious of domestic water saving, having lived through droughts, and helped distribute water to those in need from her family's well. Due to her father's job, Tin lived in many different states around the country growing up, often in cities. Thus, Tin has a wide range of experiences relating to water supply and access. Similar to Min, Tin's relatively privileged childhood and Burmese ancestry meant that she did not experience the discrimination and inequalities faced by many of the poorer and ethnic minority groups in Burma. This vignette will explore Tin's drinking water practices, recycling water practices and personal hygiene routines.

Trusted Drinking Water

For Tin, the quality of drinking water in Burma was known through different supply systems, scientific knowledge of water-transmitted diseases, and embodied knowledge. Concerned about water-transmitted diseases when living in Burma, Tin would normally boil tap water (supplied to her house through government pipelines) in an electric kettle, and then leave it to cool down naturally, without refrigeration, before drinking it. In the last 10 years, Tin and her family were able to buy drinking water in 20 litre containers from a company that delivered water to their house. This meant that they no longer needed to treat the water themselves. Tin did not trust the government water supply in Burma to be of a safe drinking standard; in her words, she did not "believe the quality of the water pipes, the water system." On the other hand, naturally sourced water, which had not travelled through pipe lines or systems, such as well water,

was considered by Tin to be of "fantastic" quality, "fresher" and better than tap water to drink. Tin's knowledge of Burmese drinking water contrasts with the Western world's acceptance of 'good' drinking water as purified, processed and controlled and 'bad' water as non-processed and non-commodified (Kaika, 2005). Instead, Tin regards Burmese water to be of very good quality when it is from a well, rather than a tap.

Living in Australia, Tin accesses her drinking water through the kitchen tap, rather than purchasing water. Tin is happy to drink Australian tap water as she believes that the water quality is maintained to a high standard and she trusts the water services. In her words "there's no doubt for the water quality". As well as Australian water being trustworthy, domestic water is understood by Tin as "unlimited". Tin believes that talking about domestic water in an Australian context is unimportant, explaining that she would not want to criticise someone's practices as being wasteful, due to the perceived endless supply. Tin's impression of an endless supply is particularly interesting since she arrived in Australia in 2007, during times of drought, where water restrictions were imposed on Sydney households, including her own. This perception may be explained by the sociotechnical systems of supply embedded in Australia (Sofoulis, 2005), which work to hide water scarcity problems. Tin no longer needs to switch on an electric pump, draw water manually from a well, or purchase water from a company; she just needs to turn on the tap. By contrast, in Burma, drinking water scarcity issues are rendered visible through water provisioning systems that rely on wells, electric pumps, manual labour or purchasing bottled water. In Burma, Tin framed water through discourses of scarcity and therefore understands water as a valuable resource. Yet now in Australia, Tin understands water through sets of ideas that engender a 'fantasy of an endless supply' (Sofoulis, 2005).

As advocated by Pink et al. (2013), a sensory approach which focuses upon theories of place, movement and practice allows us to identify the social, material and invisible dimensions of home. Following this, examining water practices through a sensory lens can help to identify how participants make sense of the space of home. Tin draws upon

her sensorial knowledge to understand water quality, commenting upon how Australian and Burmese water tastes different.

Louisa: So, did that water taste different?

Tin: Yes, taste different.

Louisa: Yeah, how so?

Tin: My country, water and Australian water is different. The taste is different and after heating the taste different as well because some of the minerals gone because of the temperature so it's different.

Tin understands the taste to be different, and thus senses the quality to be different, and is impressed by the quality in Australia. Indeed, she notes how post-treated Burmese water tastes different. Although Tin finds it hard to describe the difference in taste as she is now well used to drinking Australian water, she remembers her sister's recent visit to Australia and her experience drinking Australian tap water. Tin's sister disliked drinking tap water, complaining that the taste was unpleasant and Tin recalled that she "got a medication smell from the tap water." Instead of being trusted, water with a medicinal smell is something that is questioned.

For Tin, knowledge of drinking water is also based on its supply sources. Tin explains how in rural areas of Burma, during the dry summer period, poorer people would not have sufficient water, as there was no access to a government supply. This brings to light questions of water access and social status in Burma, as Tin (living in the same area) did have a government supply of water due to her privileged position based on her father's elite employment status. Tin and her family were also in a position to buy drinking water when government pipelines were disrupted. On the other hand, poorer people were reliant on rainwater or wells for drinking. In times of drought, these sources for accessing drinking water were unreliable. By experiencing the value placed on water by less affluent people, Tin learnt lessons about the precious quality of water, resulting in her and her family practicing water saving strategies, discussed in the following sections.

Waste Water: Reuse and Disposal Practices

Tin's water recycling practices provide useful insights into what water is regarded as waste and what water is understood as having value. Exploring these practices also indicates what changes Tin's behaviour in regards to recycling water.

Despite knowing Australian domestic water as 'unlimited' through Big Water systems of supply, Tin continues certain water saving practices. These practices were learnt as a child growing-up in Chin State from her parents, primarily her mother. This reflects the findings in the literature that migrants bring with them generational practices of frugality (Head & Muir, 2007). For example, the water that Tin uses to wash rice or vegetables with is collected and used to water her vegetable patch in the back garden in her home in Sydney (Figure 5).

Tin: But the thing is that here [Australia], the water is unlimited, we can use anytime in whatever you want to use. But the thing is, for me, this habit, it's still coming, I wash my rices and I still using for my garden. So that's the answer, just like habit and then, even unlimited water and water quality is very good, I don't need to think about the water supply, I don't need to worry about it. But still, I am using this habit. Still practising.

For Tin, water cares for her by caring for her vegetable garden, enabling her to grow Burmese vegetables. Insights from migrant gardening literature reveal that plants are grown specifically to create a sense of place (Graham & Connell, 2007). Furthermore, re-creating a garden similar to that of home countries allows migrants to feel more settled in an unfamiliar landscape (Galvin, 2001; Gleeson et al., 2001). Indeed, by growing these plants, Tin has altered the backyard space to make it feel more like home. Additionally, Tin captures rainwater in a small bucket to use on the garden, a practice that is commonplace in Burma. Of course, water is integral to the survival of the garden, and thus helps to maintain it physically, but also in a way that stabilises Tin's sense of self and home.

Interestingly, Tin refuses to use dishwashing water on her vegetables as she understands this water to be waste which no longer holds value. Tin is also apprehensive about recycling laundry water because

she is concerned that the chemicals from detergents may be detrimental to the health of her plants. It is interesting that Tin talks about chemicals as killing her plants rather than fertilising, considering the beneficial properties of phosphates found in some detergents. Here, Tin draws on sensorial knowledge to understand that visually clean water from washing rice is acceptable to use but soapy water is unacceptable. However, as Tin explains, she is willing to test reusing laundry water after speaking with her Burmese neighbours who have adopted this gardening practice. Her acceptance to attempt this recycling method illustrates how Tin negotiates her desire to save water and her understandings of what water is categorised as waste.



Figure 5: A common sight in Tin's household: water used for food preparation waits in a bucket in the outside laundry to be used on the garden. Photograph by Louisa Welland.

Intimate Water: Cleanliness and Comfort

Tin's personal hygiene routines illuminate how water is understood through material and sensorial knowledge and highlights the gendered dimensions of certain practices.

When asked if any water-related practices from life in Burma were missed, Tin expresses the frustration she has when trying to adjust the shower in her Sydney home to the right temperature.

Mm, because in here [Sydney], you have to use the hot water system all the time, you have to adjust before you use the water, the hot water system. Sometimes it's too cold, sometimes it's too hot. Over there [Burma] we don't need to, we just do the normal water, not too cold, not too hot. Just normal and more fresh.

In Australia, Tin feels that the material quality of water (the temperature) isn't 'right', as opposed to water in Burma which is "normal" and "fresh". This exemplifies how Tin bases her perception on whether Australian or Burmese water is best to shower with on her sensorial and material knowledge. Tin understands that washing using the 'right' water temperature is essential in order to make herself feel right. Tin's washing practice in Burma involved using a small plastic bucket to scoop cold water from a tank onto her body, carried out in a shower room inside her home. Despite enjoying the material qualities of cold Burmese water, Tin finds that the Australian method of using a shower is more convenient and comfortable. She describes the convenience of showering; "... automatically you turn it on and straight away wash." Whilst Tin appreciates that scooping uses less water, there is no guilt in having regular showers, sometimes twice a day in hot weather. Indeed, Tin expresses how she is now able to "enjoy the water". Tin's enjoyment of water is tied up with the technology in which it is supplied and hence the ease with which it is available. However, Tin's enjoyment of showering is constantly in negotiation with her desire to save water, based upon her experiences living in Burma. Thus, she believes her showers to be 'very quick'.

In her Australian home, Tin has installed a water spray on her toilet for hygiene purposes. This modification of the bathroom is to replicate her toilet practices in Burma, where a hose would be used to wash with rather than using toilet paper.

Louisa: So that's something you've made to make it feel right for you? To make you feel comfortable.

Tin: Make comfortable. Make more for good personal hygiene. She [Tin's mother] would think. Over there [Burma] after toilet, we use the water. So feel is different. For men it doesn't matter, especially for women if we don't use the water it's something feeling different.

By modifying the toilet, Tin is able to continue her Burmese toileting practices whilst living in Australia. This change helps Tin to make her mother feel comfortable visiting her Australian home and enables Tin to maintain a sense of home by feeling hygienic. Tin mentions how this change is particularly important for women, explaining how not using water after going to the toilet causes a different, unknown feeling – something that is not 'right'. This highlights the gendered differences associated with personal cleanliness practices in Burmese culture. By installing this spray, and using water this way, Tin not only maintains her house as home but also maintains her sense of self as a Burmese woman. Unlike Min (Chapter 4), who rents, Tin's household ownership allows her to make changes to her home to make it feel right for her.

Chapter Summary

Tin's narrative reveals insights about water and home-making practices from an affluent Burmese perspective, but one that has experienced rural Burmese living and water scarcity problems. Three themes have helped to unpack Tin's ideas and practices about water: trusted water, waste water, and intimate water. Tin's drinking water practices promulgate discourses of trust and help to explain how trust of Australian drinking water is gained through embodied and sensory knowledge. Tin's continuation of water recycling practices demonstrates her household sustainability methods and provides insights into how water is categorised as waste or valuable. Finally, Tin's personal hygiene routines highlight the importance of the material and sensory knowledge surrounding scooping, as well as the transition to showering due to values of comfort and convenience. Overall, Tin uses water as a home-making practice in her everyday routines, particularly drinking, showering and gardening, to sustain both her house in Sydney as home and her sense of self.

CHAPTER SIX

*KYAW ZAW: TRUSTED WATER, INTIMATE WATER
AND RELIGIOUS WATER*



In Burma, Kyaw Zaw (now in his 50s) worked as a history teacher for a university in Yangon. He had a relatively affluent background growing-up in Yangon where his father held a ministerial position under British colonial rule. As part of the wealthier population in Burma, Kyaw Zaw's parents would sometimes employ a maid in their family home to help with domestic duties. Although part of the Burmese ethnic majority, Kyaw Zaw's political opinions did not align with those of the socialist military party, and thus, during the 1988 uprisings in Burma against the government, Kyaw Zaw was forced to retire from his university employment. Kyaw Zaw left Burma for Bangkok, where he stayed for one year whilst waiting for a refugee visa to enter Australia. Kyaw Zaw migrated to Sydney in 1998 where his wife, Ni Ni, joined him three years later. Now, Kyaw Zaw, Ni Ni and his two daughters, aged 16 and 9 years old, live in a small rented unit in Lidcombe, western Sydney. The family moved to this suburb from Petersham due to the established Burmese community living there and the Buddhist monastery. Many migrants to Australia choose to live close to people with similar language, cultural, and religious backgrounds for social and economic support (Hugo, 1995). Indeed, Ni Ni explains how communicating in Burmese while living in Lidcombe makes her happy. Kyaw Zaw is highly educated and wrote his PhD thesis whilst living in Australia on the history of the Burmese Socialist Party. Unable to find employment in his field of study, Kyaw Zaw continues to work as a taxi driver, a job he entered when first arriving in Sydney. This vignette will explore Kyaw Zaw's drinking and showering practices and how these have been sustained through migration and the importance of water and Buddhist domestic rituals.

Trusted Drinking Water

Living in Yangon, Kyaw Zaw's drinking water was accessed through government pipelines. Kyaw Zaw spoke of piped water as being "more clear" than well water. However, before drinking, piped water was filtered by his mother into a glass bottle through a thin cloth to remove any "dirt", then stored and cooled in the fridge. This practice of treatment and storage of piped urban water was learnt from older generations, and was primarily the responsibility

of women. The gendered dimensions of drinking water preparation in Burma resonate with the gendered home-making practices found more generally in Burma. In Kyaw Zaw's experience, it was very rare to boil water as a treatment method before drinking it in either his household or social network. This experience contrasts with the practices of many other households in Burma as 61% of rural and urban Burmese households boil water as a treatment method (UNICEF, 2011). On the other hand, straining water through a cloth is a method employed by 79% of households, aligning with Kyaw Zaw's experience of preparing drinking water. Although this method was found to be common, from a health perspective it is considered to be an inadequate treatment method (UNICEF, 2011) as microbes simply flow through the filter rather than being captured. Interestingly, now living in Australia, Kyaw Zaw and his family boil tap water before drinking it. This may be due to the treatment practices of his wife, who brought this practice to their home in Australia when she migrated.

Unlike many participants who trust Australian tap water and drink it without treatment, Kyaw Zaw's family boil tap water in an electric kettle, leave it to cool in the kettle and transfer this water to a large glass dispenser (Figure 6). This process is carried out twice a day and is the primary source of drinking water for all family members.



Figure 6: Boiled tap water in the glass dispenser ready for drinking on the kitchen bench. Photograph by Louisa Welland.

Ni Ni explains how she fills her daughters' school water bottles with boiled water. Kyaw Zaw adds that although drinking water is provided for taxi drivers at Sydney airport, he never drinks this, opting to instead buy bottled water. Despite the standard to which Australian water is treated, Kyaw Zaw and Ni Ni explain how they do not trust the systems of supply to be 'clean'. Boiling tap water is needed to feel more "healthy" and "to clean the germs or insect." Here, the emerging discourse of 'trust' of drinking water is tied in with ideas surrounding germ theory. Germ theory of disease is a relatively new understanding in terms of the history of human settlement (Salzman, 2012). Arising from research scientists during the late 19TH century, germ theory established the idea that microbes were responsible for water-borne disease (Sedlak, 2014). Although water filtration technologies were effective at removing pathogens, filtration alone could not prevent disease in highly contaminated water sources. Hence treatment methods, such as boiling and chlorination, which aim to kill pathogenic microbes. Chlorination of water supplies at the beginning of the 20TH century has been marked as the "most significant development in drinking water treatment" (Salzman, 2012, p.99), having "revolutionised urban water" (Sedlak, 2014, p.62). Yet, adding a chemical to piped water generally deemed to be safe was, at the time, considered by many to be 'unnatural' (Salzman, 2012). Even today, conspiracy theories circulating about the addition of fluoride to drinking water give rise to distrust of the systems of supply and the powers that govern them. As well as concerns over becoming unwell from pathogens in piped water, Kyaw Zaw distrusts the Australian government's involvement in the treatment process.

You know even the government or something—who knows when they're coming from the pipe, maybe in the pipe is insect or something. Maybe they put something to treat it like medicine or something like that.

Kyaw Zaw's distrust of governmental powers may stem from his experiences with politics in Burma, and his status as a political refugee.

Kyaw Zaw also expresses concerns about how far piped water has travelled and possible contamination en route. This apprehension may be

the result of the invisibility of piped water networks, and lack of knowledge about the source.

Intimate Water: Scooping versus Showering

Living in Burma, Kyaw Zaw washed himself by sharing a bucket of water with his family and using a smaller cup to scoop water onto his body. Now, Kyaw Zaw must negotiate the technology of the Australian shower and the bath tub. In retaining his washing practices, Kyaw Zaw mainly employs the scooping method, using buckets (Figure 7) and standing in the bath tub. Having experienced water restrictions whilst living in Sydney, Kyaw Zaw recalls how the council installed water-saving showerheads in each household in Lidcombe. Despite this water-saving technology, Kyaw Zaw believes that scooping uses less water than the showers he has encountered in Australia. This may help to explain why he continues to wash this way, as the idea of saving water is integral to Kyaw Zaw's home-making practices, self, and everyday life.

Kyaw Zaw washes himself once every two days. This contrasts to the daily ritual of cleaning oneself that has become something of a social norm in Australia. Kyaw Zaw argues that Australians need to shower more frequently on account of their diet



Figure 7: Bucket and scoop in the bathroom that Kyaw Zaw uses to wash himself with. Photograph by Louisa Welland.

of “raw meat”, resulting in them becoming sweaty and smelly. In contrast, on account of his diet and ‘Burmese body’, he needs to wash only once every two days.

For Kyaw Zaw, Australian domestic water is understood through discourses of ease, comfort, and convenience. He talks about how water is ‘easy’ to access in Australia and is subsequently a topic that is rarely discussed among some Burmese migrant households. Having primarily used cold water for washing himself in Burma, the comfort and convenience of accessing hot water in Australia is something that is not a taken-for-granted service. As he explains,

Here [Australia] is very convenient. Not only can we use the cold water but also the hot water. It’s a very advantage in Australia. As I already mentioned was young so very rare to use the hot water. Sometimes we need hot water to get more healthy or the muscle is very pain. We use the hot water is more better. We can’t use the hot water in Burma. It’s a very advantage living in Australia.

In Burma, water supply was a pertinent concern due to the irregularity of supply. In contrast, the convenience of supply in Australia has resulted in water disappearing into the background of everyday life and has become something that is no longer thought about (as much) (Sofoulis, 2005). However, in Kyaw Zaw’s home, this ‘practical consciousness’ of embodied practice, routine and habit is disrupted by the leaking pipe, thus becoming a ‘discursive consciousness’ (Giddens, 1984). Kyaw Zaw expresses his frustration and disappointment when their real estate agent did not send someone to fix this problem straight away.

We notice that very leaking from the pipe. Whenever we look to inform, not only me but my wife tell the agent. Never they come. ... No one like this or that there is something wrong they should come straight away. Also the water that we inform our duty. They didn’t come straight [away]. Very disappointing.

Articulated through this quotation is Kyaw Zaw’s onus to care for water, based on his experiences of shortages and his understanding of the symbolic qualities of water. Kyaw Zaw’s responsibility based

on his experiences and understandings, rather than financial concern, is heightened given that his landlord pays the water bill.

Having primarily used cold water for washing himself in Burma, the comfort and convenience of accessing hot water in Australia is something that is not a taken-for-granted service. As he explains,

Religious Water

Like many people of Burmese ethnicity, Kyaw Zaw and his family are Buddhists. One corner of the family living room is a place reserved for their shrine – a book shelf holding their offerings to Buddha. This shrine contains flowers, candles, fruit, statues, and small glasses of water (Figure 8).

Ni Ni explained how flowers are donated each week, changed specifically on a Saturday, and fresh drinking water is provided every morning. Water and food is offered to the enlightened beings as, according to Kyaw Zaw, it is believed that Buddha is “...always with us. That’s why to stay alive we



Figure 8: Buddhist shrine in the living room includes nine small glasses of water. Photograph by Louisa Welland.

donate". According to Buddhist teachings, the offering of drinking water signifies auspiciousness and the water should be clean, cool and fresh. This expectation of drinking water may help to explain why water is filtered and boiled, as the notion of purity is tied to faith. Generally, offerings that please the senses, such as smell, taste and touch are used. As such, the material and sensory qualities of water are particularly important in Buddhism. For Kyaw Zaw and his family, water is thus known through religious teachings. Water is embedded in their daily life through religious rituals that help constitute sacred space within their home. These ritual water practices in Kyaw Zaw's life may help explain why he considers "saving water [to be] very important for us." Additionally, Kyaw Zaw explains the cultural and religious significance of water in terms of Buddhist celebrations. Burmese New Year is celebrated in April with *Thingyan*, the water festival. During this festival, water is thrown at one another to metaphorically wash away the sins of the previous year. Kyaw Zaw explains the symbolic qualities of water along the lines of peace, friendship, and cleanliness. Water is not only known as, "important for life for all human beings", but also as a moral cleansing agent, intimately tied into Burmese culture and Buddhism. This way of knowing water helps to explain how Kyaw Zaw understands saving water to be a cultural norm that is part of what constitutes a Buddhist.

his reciprocal relationship with water, based on experiences growing up in Burma. Lastly, religious water practices create sacred spaces within his home. Religious water rituals help not only to (re)create sense of self as a Buddhist and sense of home, but also underscore a personal responsibility to save water from wastage.

Chapter Summary

Kyaw Zaw's narrative provides insights into water cultures as a home-making practice through three themes: trusted water, intimate water, and religious water. Trusted drinking water is tied to understandings of water supply, germs, treatment, and water regulation authorities. Distrust in piped water means that an individual within the household, normally a primary carer, takes on the role of water treatment. This retention of practices after migration, even after some 15 years of living in Australia, highlights the extent to which practices are embedded and reproduced in order to make sense of self and home. Intimate water practices are tied to ideas of freshness and cleanliness. Kyaw Zaw's continued scooping practices illustrate his principle of saving water, and thus demonstrates

CHAPTER SEVEN

MYA: PHYSICALLY LABOURED WATER AND GENDERED WATER



Mya (pseudonym) arrived in Australia 17 months ago with her husband and three year old daughter. Mya and her family are Chin refugees from Burma who fled the country due to religious oppression. As Christians in a predominantly Buddhist society, they were not free to practice their religion. Mya fled Burma first to Malaysia, where she stayed for three and a half years before arriving in Australia in 2013. Mya and her family decided to settle in Wollongong on the coast of NSW due to family ties. Mya grew up in a village in mountainous Chin State (the state which has the highest poverty rate in Burma) before moving to Yangon, where she studied for five years. Mya's village was far from urban centres, a two day trip on foot to the nearest city. Mya's experiences of domestic water provide valuable insights into one of the more vulnerable groups in Burma and now as a refugee living in Australia. This vignette will explore Mya's hardships involving water whilst living in Burma, the gendered division of domestic labour in Burma, and how her everyday practices have changed since arriving in Australia.

Laboured Water

For Mya, life in Chin State was physically demanding. There was no electricity or government water supply to households. Hence, water for everyday needs was collected twice daily from a small stream near the village. Villagers, normally women, walked to the stream to collect water in a large tin container, and carry it home on their backs. The physical effort involved in securing water for the family without the aid of electricity, wells, or pumps, helps to explain why Mya regards saving water as so important.

... it is difficult to get water in Burma, especially in Chin State. So we have to carry water, it doesn't come automatically to our house. ... it's very difficult to get water, some people get up early in the morning to get water because a lot of people, they want to carry water, there is a stream so every person has to get water from the small stream, so it is difficult. And try to save water yes as it is difficult to get you know, water.

Wasting water was frowned upon in Mya's village. For example, her personal washing took place

outside the house as bathrooms in rural Burma are seldom located inside. Due to the difficulty of securing water, scooping had to be carried out in a way that maximised the potential of water for washing and minimised waste. Additionally, the outside nature of washing meant that it was a practice open for surveillance by others.

Some people throw on their back when they hurry, so people will say, 'Oh, you are wasting water!' So you have to pour on your body so that you will not waste water.

The hard labour that Mya experienced in Burma did not stop at collecting water. Personal washing in Chin State was particularly difficult during the cold winter months due to the absence of inside bathrooms, limiting personal washes to only once a week, compared to every day in summer. Mya remembers the physical pain associated with washing herself in Burma during winter:

Yeah, very cold. And it's windy as well because we don't have bathroom in our house, it's outside you know, so when we pour water on our body, so the wind comes and our skins crack you know, like this.

Louisa: Oh, that sounds painful.

Mya: Yes, it's painful. Sometimes, heels crack and blood came out.

This points to how Mya knows water through the sensuous body as a painful rather than pleasurable practice during winter. However, despite Mya's painful memories of outside scooping, she sometimes misses the practice now that she lives in Australia and uses an inside shower.

Sometimes, you know, I still want to scoop water and I, I feel something you know, when I pour water on my body, especially when it is hot, I prefer those things to scoop water and then pour it on my body instead of using the shower.

Mya prefers the feeling of pouring cold water on her body in warmer months in Burma rather than using the shower. Showering in Australia, Mya feels that she cannot use cold water, even in summer. This points to Mya's embodied knowledge of water, knowing it through the sensory feelings that she has when pouring it manually onto

her body and comparing these feelings of being showered automatically through a tap. That said, the convenience of personal washing through use of the shower and availability of warm water in cooler months has changed Mya's routine. She can now shower every day, even in winter. This increase in the frequency of personal washing, made possible by the systems of supply, illustrates how Mya has conformed to the mainstream norms of cleanliness in Australia by maintaining personal hygiene every day.

Gendered Water Household Practices

Growing up in Chin State, Mya lived in a patriarchal society, which reflects the Burmese norm that regards men as the heads of the household. Culturally, women are expected to care for children and are responsible for the well-being of the family and domestic duties. This understanding of women's roles positions them as home-makers, and this is reinforced by the home-making practices that they carry out, such as cooking, cleaning and washing. Thus, drawing upon Blunt and Dowling (2006), home is created through embodied familial-gender relations. In Chin State, it was Mya's and her mother's responsibility to collect water from the stream and wash dishes and clothes, rather than her brother's or father's.

Louisa: And who would do the washing up?

Mya: Normally me and my mum. ...

Especially in our culture, normally men didn't wash the dishes so women, they thought it was the women's responsibility, so the woman has to do it.

In Mya's experience, doing the laundry in Burma was a strenuous and constant chore as there was no washing machine, so laundry was hand washed with cold water using a stick and board. Moving into her house in Wollongong, a washing machine was provided for the family by a refugee organisation, along with beds and a fridge. This illustrates how the washing machine is regarded as a home necessity in Australia. Although Mya finds using the washing machine easier, she continues to wash some clothes by hand. Justifying this Mya explains,

I get used to it sometimes. I feel washing with

our hands it much cleaner than the washing machine. When we use washing machine, if there is a stain it cannot go away.

The fact that Mya considers washing machines to be inefficient in terms of cleaning affirms ideas in the literature surrounding laundering practices. Shove (2003) explores how the dominant rationale for washing clothes has shifted away from ideas of health and hygiene and towards values of image and presentation. Thus, the main purpose of washing machines and detergents is to 'freshen-up' clothes and care for them, rather than to wash clothes because of the cleanliness they provide the body. In contrast, Mya's reasons for washing clothes revolve around removing stains and dirt, due to her experiences living in Burma. Encountering the washing machine in Australia, with its expectations of freshening and maintaining clothes, results in Mya questioning its efficiency in the context of what she understands as clean laundry.

The gendered responsibilities of home-making have begun to break down now Mya lives in Australia.

Louisa: And now that you live in Australia do you still do the majority of the washing up or does your husband help out as well?

Mya: Yes, my husband is helping, he is very supportive so, sometimes he will do washing clothes and sometimes he helps me clean plates.

Louisa: Yeah.

Mya: It's not like in Chin State, you know. We're lucky.

Mya's sole responsibility to the household as carer and provider, understood by cultural norms and her associated relationship with water, has become less important now that she is living in Australia. This may be a result of the ease of access Mya and her family now have to water, allowing Mya more time for work and study. However, Mya worries that sometimes the convenience of life in Australia has made her "lazy".

Through Mya's narrative, it has emerged that from her experience in Burma, women's and men's relationships with water were different. For example, Mya had to wash herself outside, wrapping her

longyi (long sarong-style skirt) around her body to maintain privacy. On the other hand, in her words, “men, they can just wear the undie”. Indeed, reflecting on her past routines Mya explains,

I don't miss my water routine because it's very difficult for, especially for women, you know, we have to carry for shower, you know, so, when I think of that, life is very difficult for Chin State. In Australia it is much easier.

Less affluent Chin women seem to have a different relationship with water; they must carry it, wash clothes and dishes with it, and struggle to maintain privacy while using it. Now, Mya's relationship with water has changed as she no longer needs to collect or carry it and can enjoy the privacy of an inside bathroom.

Mya's experience living in Burma and familiarity with water scarcity and drought reflects how water is used as a home-making practice. As Mya states, “I value water, we cannot live without water so I try to save as much as I can.” Mya still considers saving water to be important now that she lives in Australia. For example, to avoid wasting water, Mya captures leaking tap water and uses it for hand washing clothes (Figure 9). This practice illustrates Mya's reciprocal relationship with water – how by caring for water she is caring for self, due to the hardships and restrictions she experienced living in rural Burma.

Chapter Summary

As Mya identifies as part of an ethnic minority group and refugee, her narrative reveals insights about water as a home-making practice from the perspective of one of the most vulnerable groups in Burma and Australia. These insights are revealed through themes of physically laboured and gendered water. Migrating from Chin State, Mya's past is embedded in gendered, labour intensive domestic duties of collecting stream water and washing clothes and dishes in buckets that prioritised saving water. Mya still prioritises saving water – as illustrated by the tub collecting water from a leaking tap in readiness for a hand wash. Mya's transition to daily showers in Australia points to the importance of the role of systems of supply, alongside new

social norms in encouraging new understandings of personal hygiene, and hence the frequency with which bodies need to be washed. Likewise, Mya's preference for hand washing clothes demonstrates how Western technology does not meet her expectations and understandings of cleanliness. Continuing hand washing illustrates the role of water in caring for her clothes, ultimately caring for herself and family and maintaining a sense of self and home.



Figure 9: Leaking tap water in Mya's bathroom is collected in a small tub to be used for hand washing clothes. Photograph by Louisa Welland.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DRINKING WATER



8.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explore the role of drinking water in the home-making practices of first generation Burmese migrant households. The chapter will explore how domestic subjectivities are made and remade through the interplay between embodied knowledge of drinking water, discourses about potable water, systems of supply and water quality, and practices of access and treatment. Attention will be paid to the processes of how environmental knowledge and practices around drinking are retained or change after migration. The chapter is structured around a discussion across all participant insights in terms of access to and understandings of 'safe' drinking water.

Food and eating is central to work exploring the relationships between place, power, and subjectivities of migrants (Johnston & Longhurst, 2012). Yet, little attention has been paid to water and the drinking practices of migrants, particularly how these sustain reciprocal relationships between self, social units, and home. On the one hand, public health and medical literature reminds us that access to a supply of potable water is crucial to our survival. On the other hand, there is a notable silence in the literature in regards to how drinking water is a practice that constitutes everyday life.

8.2 Drinking Water Supply and Access to 'Safe' Water

According to Salzman (2012), drinking water is not only an essential physical resource, but also a social resource. In some societies access to a safe supply of water reveals much about social status. Safe drinking water was a theme running across all participants' narratives. Considering the experiences of those from affluent and less affluent backgrounds, supply and access to 'safe' drinking water in Burma is contingent on socio-economic status.

Migrants who had experienced living in large Burmese urban areas (often those who were wealthier) spoke of accessing safe drinking water from the tap, provided through government pipelines. In more recent times, those living in Burmese cities who could afford to, purchased drinking water from private companies. However,

poorer Burmese households were often excluded from the ability to access purified drinking water. For example, Min (28, student), whose family was able to buy drinking water, points out this social divide, and the health consequences for those in less affluent positions:

Until recently we have drinking waters. However, it's not provided by government like Australia, and we have to buy that. It's additional cost. ... Even for the poor people, like, if they don't buy they just have to drink polluted, not clean water and they can get diseases et cetera.

Similarly, Tin (30s, part-time nurse and student), who also held a relatively privileged position whilst living in Burma, adds how less affluent people cannot afford water supply infrastructure:

Let's talk about poorer people. Poorer people, they don't have that facility [electric pump drawing water from well]. They not going to do that because... the installations are a lot of money...

Evidently, access to drinking water in Burma is embedded in uneven social relations.

Exploring the history of drinking water, Salzman (2012, p.74) considers the seemingly simple question, "how do we know what 'safe' water is?" There is very little published data from Burma that addresses this question. One study has tested the quality of drinking water in Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw (the capital) from sources such as public roadside pots, non-piped, piped, and manufactured bottled water (Sakai et al., 2013). It was found that water from these sources, including the bottled water, was lower than the Japanese drinking water standard and may be unsuitable for drinking. Source water quality was also tested by examining samples from two dams and a deep well in Nay Pyi Taw. The results found that this water was suitable for drinking, but not without appropriate treatment (Sakai et al., 2013).

In the global North, society comes to know supplied drinking water as safe through medical knowledge, treatment practices, and legislation that stipulates government or corporate responsibility (Salzman, 2012). However, as told by these Burmese narratives, knowing water quality and preparation of safe drinking water was primarily the responsibility of

the individual, particularly those designated the role of primary carer.

For participants who had lived in urban centres in Burma, treatment of piped water for drinking was common. All participants who lived in cities ensured that tap water was boiled before drinking, with some employing a secondary treatment method of filtering through either cloths or purchased filtration systems. According to a UNICEF report on drinking and sanitation, boiling water is deemed to be an adequate treatment method, however, straining through cloth filters is not (UNICEF, 2011). Emerging from drinking water talk with affluent Burmese households was a discourse revolving around ideas of 'trust'. Trust of quality and supply tended to determine whether treatment methods were employed or not. Tin, for example, did not "believe" the quality of water supplied in Yangon and thus boiled it out of health concerns.

Tin: So... the tap water, we not going to drink straight away from the tap water because we don't believe the quality.

Louisa: You could get sick.

Tin: Yeah. So, we collect the tap water and then boil. Hot water. Boil with the hot water tank and then after that we just cool down, leave it there. And then we drink it.

Similarly, Min Zaw (late 30s, affluent background) also distrusted the government supply in Yangon, despite the addition of chlorine, and boiled tap water before drinking out of concern of water-borne diseases.

We've got the centralised system but I think it has been damaged for a long time, so all of we have the chlorination system but we can't trust it, that chlorination is sufficient, to drink from the tap water.

Likewise to Tin and Min Zaw, Myint (50s, Shan-Burmese) also boiled water when living in urban Burma to prevent her from becoming sick. Evidently, discourses of trust are intimately linked to health discourses, and the concern of falling ill from untreated water among urban, affluent households is clear. Interestingly, water from wells was regarded by some to be of better drinking quality compared to supplied tap water in the city. Well water for Myint

was understood as being "very clean" and for Tin, "fantastic" quality. This may point to distrust in the systems of supply in Burma, as once water comes out of the tap it is no longer understood as being clean or fresh, and must be treated.

In contrast to affluent, urban backgrounds, participants who had experienced living beyond metropolitan centres (such as in Chin State and Karen State), who were often less affluent and part of ethnic minority groups, did not have access to a government supply of water. Methods used to access drinking water involved demanding physical labour, walking to streams to collect water or manually drawing water from wells. Rudy (28, Chin, refugee) lived almost half a kilometre from the well where she collected her drinking water daily. Rudy had to get up early in the morning every day to walk up a hill to draw water from a well that was safe to drink. The demand on the well was such that by midday the water was no longer potable. In Rudy's village, drinking water shortages were always a possibility due to the high demand on the one source. Thus, the amount of water that Rudy collected aligned to their needs for just that day.

... there is a shortage of water, so we have to get up early in the morning and collect water because a lot of people collect water. ... And so we put in a big container. But the chief of the village told them not to have a big container because everybody want to collect water. So if they have very big container and collect lots of water, so some people may not get sufficient water. ... So when they carry or collect lots of water, so it may be in the noon, like, maybe 10 o'clock it's dirty, the water tastes not pure. So we cannot drink that water. And then we use that dirty water for animals. So for that reason we have to collect just sufficient for maybe, for just only for in the morning, for a day.
(Translation)

Salzman (2012, p. 75) notes that the "conception of safety evolves over time and across cultures, informed by a society's understanding of disease, technological capability, and aversion to risk." Indeed, it became evident that understandings of what constituted safe water differed across households. Less affluent participants, who grew up in rural villages, often did not treat water before

drinking. Mya, Rudy and Sui relied on subsistence farming while living in Chin State and rarely treated water. Mya considered the stream water that she collected to be “naturally ... very clean” and therefore did not need treatment. Contracting water-borne illnesses from this source was never a concern for Mya, despite her noting that animals would drink from this source, making it “dirty”.

Rudy was also unconcerned about catching diseases from untreated well water. On some occasions, Rudy would boil water (on an open fire, as opposed to a kettle or stove) and filter using a cotton strainer. However, normally she would drink untreated water on account of being thirsty from hard work on the farm: “it is very hot and we are very thirsty so we just scoop the water and just drink it.” Sui (early 40s, Chin), living in a village reliant upon subsistence agriculture, received her drinking water via a network of over-ground bamboo pipes. This supply system directed flow from a stream a couple of kilometres away to a container in her house. This system required constant cooperative maintenance, with Sui and others in her village unblocking the pipes from leaves, sometimes three or four times a day. The stream water was understood as “fresh” and considered safe, therefore requiring no treatment. Yet, Sui explains how water was boiled for her father who had gastric problems. Untreated water was understood as unsuitable for elderly, ill people. For these three women, drinking untreated water is based upon the trust that they have in their own bodily health, and embodied knowledge of the smell, colour and texture of water from regular collecting, carrying, and pouring.

Living in Australia, all participants access their drinking water primarily from the kitchen tap. Similar to the findings of drinking water practices in Burma, what is understood as ‘safe’ drinking water and hence how water is prepared for drinking varies between households, dependent on personal histories, education, knowledge of systems of supply, and embodied and sensory knowledge.

For Sydney and the Illawarra (regions where participants in the study live), domestic water is supplied by Sydney Water, a corporation owned by the NSW Government. This system is dubbed by Sofoulis (2005) as ‘Big Water’, a sociotechnical system which supports the idea of water as a

taken-for-granted utility, part of the inconspicuous background of urban domestic life. In the global North, bio-politics necessitates that tap water is treated to chemical and biological analyses, regularly and stringently tested for contaminant compounds. In Australia, the *Australian Drinking Water Guidelines* (ADWG) provides a management framework for the supply of potable drinking water and how this can be achieved and assured. Although the ADWG are not mandatory standards (unlike drinking water acts in Europe and the U.S.), they provide important guidelines for both health and aesthetic values, such as taste, odour, and colour. Considering that the ADWG incorporates aesthetic values resonates with the importance of how participants understood ‘safe’ water through their sensory bodies, particularly through smell and taste.

Most migrant households who treated drinking water in Burma are comfortable drinking Australian tap water without any home treatment. These participants trust the Australian governance of drinking water. For example, Tin “believes” in the quality of the drinking water provided by the suppliers in Sydney, hence treatment practices are no longer required. Tin Theik (29, lived in Yangon), understands Australian tap water as “already decontaminated”, so does not need to worry about treatment, thus jettisoning his past boiling and filtering practices.

Yet, not all participants felt the same way about Australian tap water. Four participants continue to boil tap water before drinking. Myint (who experienced rural and urban living in Burma) has been living in Sydney for five years with her family and continues to boil tap water before drinking. Min – providing translation at the time – even comments on how his aunt’s practice is “strange”. Through laughter, Myint justifies her ‘strange’ practice, for she knows it to be different to the Australian norm, as she is concerned about getting ill from the water, despite knowing that it is treated. In the future, Myint may “attempt the culture” (translation) in Australia and drink directly from the tap, but until then – whenever that may be – she is “quite adamant” (translation) about continuing. The rationale behind Myint’s boiling practice is to retain a healthy body and her practices remain following migration because she is simply “used to

it" (translation). Myint's practice is thus ingrained in the routines and rhythms of her everyday life, and her roles and responsibilities as care giver.

Na Mu Nya (60s, Karen, refugee) has been living in Wollongong for a year and a half with her husband. Like Myint, Na Mu Nya continues boiling tap water in the kettle and leaving it to cool down without refrigeration. For Na Mu Nya, this practice was learnt from advice given by a white, English woman while she was living in a refugee camp in Thailand for 15 years, after fleeing Burma due to forced labour and ethnic wars. Na Mu Nya understands Australian tap water as clean and safe, but 'likes' to boil it before drinking. Again, this retention highlights her ingrained habit of boiling as a practice of care for the self.

Kyaw Zaw lives in Lidcombe with his wife, Ni Ni, and two young daughters. Although Kyaw Zaw did not boil tap water in Burma, opting to instead use cloth filters, he now boils water living in Australia. This can be explained by his wife's, Ni Ni's practices, who did boil water in Burma. Although Kyaw Zaw and Ni Ni have lived in Australia for well over 10 years, they distrust the governance of water supply. They spoke of a need to kill any germs in the water that might cause their family harm. This fear of falling ill from drinking untreated water may stem from past illness experiences living in Burma which reinforce their need to be healthy.

Rather than boiling water out of health concerns, Pone (40s, Shan) continues boiling water due to his personal preference of drinking hot tea rather than cold drinks.

These four participants who retain their practices all fall under a similar age bracket, from 40s to 60s. Those who did not continue treatment methods tended to be younger, in their 20s to 30s. This reveals how older generations may be more inclined to continue their practices due to growing up with them and practicing them over their life course. Furthermore, these insights reveal that it is more common for Burmese women to continue boiling practices. This may be a reflection of the gendered division of water-related practices in Burma. By retaining treatment practices, Burmese women are recreating a sense of home and maintaining their familial roles as care-giver.

Longhurst and Johnston (2009, p.342) argue that "the preparation and consumption of food in the homes of migrant women is a salient example of how seemingly mundane experience can in fact be a performative politics of one's subjectivity." Following this, these findings show how the preparation and consumption of drinking water can make and remake subjectivities, particularly for women. Indeed, these examples of how treatment practices are maintained or lost illustrate how drinking water is a home-making practice in the households of some Burmese migrants. These practices of boiling, cooling, and storing water, which are intimately tied to personal histories, age and gender comprise the activity of home-making and help to sustain relationships within the home. For instance, Ni Ni's practice of boiling water to remove any harmful germs and supplying it to her daughters to take to school exemplifies her role and responsibility as mother, caring for her children. For Myint and Na Mu Nya, boiling practices are continued because it helps them feel comfortable, at ease, and at home living in a foreign country. Pink (2004) suggests how performativity associated with individual agency engages with vision, sound, smell, touch, and taste to make sense of the home environment. For Pone, it is his enjoyment of the taste of tea that makes him feel comfortable and hence 'at home', causing his boiling practices to be retained.

Migrants who have lost their treatment practices put their trust in the Australian systems of supply. Yet, the theme of anxiety still emerges here. Tin Theik no longer treats tap water in his home in Lidcombe to remove germs by boiling or sediments by filtering. Instead, his anxiety emerges from the "medicine" taste of tap water and questions surrounding the addition of chemicals to the water. In his words: "Yeah sometimes I worry... I'm kind of like scared what [added chemicals] might be doing to my body." Similarly, Min is concerned about the quality of some tap water in Australia due to its "strange" taste. This anxiety, based on responses of the sensory body, opens up a moment of reflection on how the potential loss of a healthy body may occur because treatment is no longer continued. Trust is now invested in a government institution, rather than self, as it was in Burma, where treatment practices were

understood as caring for the self and family.

8.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter addresses the aims of the project (Section 1.1) by exploring drinking water as a home-making practice of Burmese migrant households. Building on the theoretical framework outlined in Section 2.5.2, which understands water as an embodied home-making practice, this chapter has foregrounded the importance of the relationships between water, subjectivities, and roles and responsibilities. The results demonstrate that treatment practices of drinking water revolve around discourses of trust, anxiety and health. Migrants who continue treatment techniques (four out of the 16) do so based on ingrained practice, recreating a sense of home, and maintaining roles and responsibilities of care giving, to family and/or to self. Retaining these practices was found to be more often about maintaining 'healthy bodies' and 'domicile bodies' rather than specifically 'Burmese bodies'.

CHAPTER NINE

HYGIENE PRACTICES: WASHING BODIES AND LAUNDRY



9.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explore the hygiene practices of Burmese migrant households as home-making practices. Hygiene practices are a fascinating focus for analysis because they are aligned to skills, technologies, and ideas associated with cleanliness and dirt. In turn, as discussed by Shove (2003) and Waitt and Stanes (2015), ideas of cleanliness are aligned with social and moral orders as well as gendered, classed, aged, and healthy bodies. As outlined by Shove (2003) and Gibson et al. (2013) one reason that the demand for domestic water continues to ratchet upwards is the changed understanding of cleanliness that demands more frequent washing of bodies and clothes. Considering this, what can be learnt from Burmese migrants in Australia? Do Burmese migrants bring different understandings of how we can imagine both showering and laundry practices? This chapter is structured into two sections: washing bodies and laundry practices. As discussed in Chapter 3, there is a notable silence around the taboo topic of water-based toilet practices.

9.2 Washing Bodies

This first section explores the personal washing practices of Burmese migrants as a home-making practice. The section investigates how domestic subjectivities and the place of home are simultaneously made and remade through sociotechnical systems of supply, ideas of cleanliness, showering/scooping/bathing routines, and embodied knowledge of being clean. Focus is placed on the implications for domestic water consumption by paying attention to how certain cleanliness practices are retained or change following migration.

This discussion builds on the work of Hand et al. (2005) who explain how daily showering routines are an ingrained practice for most British households, so much so that for many living in the United Kingdom, it is socially and physically unacceptable to wash less often. Hand et al. (2005) account for how the shower and showering has become normalised in the global North by examining practice through the intersection of the technological systems of water supply, sets of ideas about dirt

and cleanliness and showering, bathing and washing skills. Investigating how bodies are kept clean as a home-making practice requires thinking about “the body and the self”, and exploring how cultural regimes of understanding the body involve distinct paradigms such as ‘regenerating the self’, ‘cleanliness and social order’ and ‘fit and mobile bodies’ (Shove, 2003). Shove (2003, p.109) reminds us that “bathing and showering is a delicate subject and one of considerable social and moral significance”. Washing our bodies can be thought about in terms of restoring a social and moral order about what is accepted as ‘good’. Notions of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ may be mobilised around (un)washed bodies by our senses of smell, sight, touch and texture. To understand how body washing techniques become routine and taken-for-granted we must also pay attention to technological innovation, particularly around the provision of a reliable domestic water supply and the evolving design of bathroom technology. Furthermore, an interpretation of how we wash our bodies is integral to maintaining ideas about private and public lives, and how the washing activities that help constitute the place of home are embedded in the rhythms of everyday life.

For Burmese migrant households, baths and shower technology of the Western bathroom is far from a taken-for-granted home-making technology. Instead, all participants (at one stage of their life) were familiar with cups, tanks and buckets, rather than pipes, taps, hot water, and showers. Regardless of urban or rural location or socio-economic status, all participants were familiar with scooping. Shower technology in a designed indoor space is something that, according to Min, has only recently made its way into the more affluent bathrooms of Burma. Indeed, in Mya’s experience, the very idea of having a bathroom inside the house is unfamiliar.

Although all participants employed scooping whilst living in Burma, whether this practice was a public or private matter was contingent on socio-economic status. For those with affluent backgrounds who lived in cities, washing was mostly a private affair. For those who lived and worked in subsistence agriculture, often those of lower socio-economic status and part of ethnic minority groups, washing oneself was a practice under the public gaze. Mya, Rudy, Na Mu Nya and Sui, who lived and worked

on farms, all employed the scooping method outside in a communal area, wrapping their *longyi* around their bodies to maintain privacy. Mya explains how sometimes bathing would take place in the river. Although this practice was deemed 'normal' and safe for Mya, April (who spent time living in rural Kachin State, but who had a fairly affluent background), understands washing in rivers to be "dangerous".

Considering body washing talk across the participants, two contrasting narratives emerged. First, was the preference of Burmese scooping over Australian showering. Some retained scooping and refused to use showers. Yet, other participants, despite feeling that scooping was the 'best' way to clean themselves, only showered. The second emergent narrative was the enjoyment of the comfort and convenience of the Australian shower. The following two sections explore these practices in more detail.

9.2.1 Scooping and cleanliness

Four participants out of the 16 continue to wash themselves by scooping. Rudy, who has lived in Wollongong with her family for two and a half years, avoids using the shower. Instead, she chooses to employ scooping as she did in her home country. In Rudy's case, the shower technology of the mixer tap encourages her to retain her known practice, because she finds it difficult to reach the right temperature.

So our habits not so good so when I turn on the shower I turn the tap both hot and cold water, I mix it. But sometimes it comes very hot and sometimes very cold so I prefer to have container and mix it and scoop.
(Translation)

Rudy avoids showering – an unknown practice to her – instead mixing water in a container to reach the right temperature, a practice known to be 'right' to her through her embodied knowledge. Similarly, Na Mu Nya washes herself by mixing hot and cold water in a container, standing in the bath tub and scooping water. However, unlike Rudy who can now remove her *longyi* due to the privacy of an inside bathroom, Na Mu Nya continues to wear her *longyi* when washing, despite also having this privacy. Na Mu Nya's practice of wrapping her *longyi* around her body is a habit that has become so ingrained that

she does not feel 'right' when washing without it. Sui also continues scooping methods. This retention is based on her knowledge that she feels cleaner after scooping compared to using the shower, in her words, "I prefer to scoop water and pour on my body. I feel that it is much cleaner." Sui washes herself more frequently, now once daily compared to twice a week when she lived in Chin State. This increase in frequency can be explained by the comfort and convenience of access to a hot supply of water and an inside bathroom.

Sui: Here [Australia] we take shower in the shower room and we have hot water here so it is much easier to take a shower. In Chin State it is really cool and we take a shower outside. So it's windy you know, very cold.

This reflects Shove's (2003) arguments, which suggest that the normalisation of daily showering and bathing is partly explained by advances in bathroom technology and the supply of instant heated water.

Lastly, Kyaw Zaw's scooping methods have also been retained through migration. Kyaw Zaw believes that scooping saves more water than the shower, despite the council installing a low-flow showerhead in their home. It is a combination of ingrained habit and duties to save water that explain why Kyaw Zaw continues scooping. Saving water is important to Kyaw Zaw; in his words: "...water is very important and necessary for our life. It means that we should save."

As made evident from the narratives, using cold water in scooping practices is a Burmese norm. Using cold water may be significant in a religious light, particularly in Buddhism. For example, Myint explains that she prefers washing herself with cold well water, which reflects the water that she offers to Buddha.

She feels that the water from the well is the best, so it's like, quite cold as well. And also it's very clear, crystal clear, you know? And it's cold like, it's like chilled water. ... Traditional, natural water and this water we also offer it to the Buddha. So it's very good. She feels very pleasant [scooping] the water.
(Translation)

Offering water to Buddha represents washing away greed, hatred, and impurities. Thus, washing with this water for those who identified as Buddhists may also be symbolic of cleanliness on a spiritual, moral level.

9.2.2 Showering, comfort and convenience

In contrast, others enjoy using the Australian shower, with some even glad to have left behind scooping. For example, Tin says that using the power-shower in Australia is “much better” and “more comfortable”. Tin can now access dimensions of pleasure associated with showering due to the ease and comfort in which water is supplied. In her own words, she can now “enjoy the water.” However, similarly to Rudy, Tin expresses her frustration in piped water supplied through a hot water tank as it is sometimes too hot or too cold. Whereas in Burma, the water sitting in a bathroom tank is understood as “normal water – not too cold, not too hot” and “more fresh”. Tin misses the bodily sensations of scooping as a practice understood as refreshing, rather than cleansing. Yet, hot water in Australia “makes you warm and is a good thing”, which points again to her appreciation of the comfort of the shower as a winter warming practice.

Agreeing with Tin, Min Zaw finds showering in Australia to be a better method of washing in terms of relaxing, compared to scooping as showering involves minimal effort.

Min Zaw: The shower is better.

Louisa: Why do you think that?

Min Zaw: It is easy, just, put the tap on and then, I don't need to scoop, I don't need to pour it.

For Min Zaw, using the shower and hot water “makes it easier to relax”, highlighting the importance of the material qualities of warm water when it comes to caring for his body. The ease of showering in Australia, the act of “just stand[ing] there”, for up to 15 minutes if he is feeling tired, is understood by Min Zaw as a “better lifestyle” and more water efficient compared to using buckets. For Kyi Kyi and Nyan (an elderly couple) using the shower is much more comfortable as they “don't need to use the strength” that they need for bending and scooping.

Unlike the previous narratives which pervaded enjoyment of using showers, May prefers scooping, yet contradicts her preference by using the shower. May understands the water coming from the shower head to be “limited”, compared to in Burma where she felt like she had the freedom to use much more water. Additionally, May feels like she has more control over her washing practice by scooping as she physically pours water on her body where she needs it, compared to showering where it “goes anywhere”. Min prefers scooping as a refreshing practice over showering. However, his preference for scooping must be negotiated with the space of the shower, which he believes is too small for scooping practices, thus making this method “impossible”, and forcing him to conform to regular showering. This exemplifies how sometimes the materiality of the space of the Australian bathroom and the lack of familiar objects, such as buckets and scoops, causes scooping practices to be jettisoned.

Additionally, Tin Theik expresses how he does not feel as clean after showering compared to scooping, yet has not retained scooping practices. Compared to how Tin and Min Zaw enjoy the shower as being comfortable and relaxing, for Tin Theik, showering is a brief affair:

I don't really like staying in the shower or bathroom for very long time. Just a quick process, you know. Cleaning fast and that's it. I hate staying there long.

For Tin Theik, the purpose of showering is to remove sweat quickly and efficiently (on account of a skin condition) and is therefore a process of cleaning rather than relaxing. This contrasts with his washing practices in Burma, which involved a sense of community:

...you see everybody doing it [scooping] you know, even like, when you're living in the apartment you look at the back yards, some people living on the ground floor you can see they coming outside in their backyard having a shower.

The Australian norm of showering behind locked bathroom doors is a far cry from the neighbourhood backyard showers in Burma that Tin Theik now misses.

What becomes clear from these narratives is that the

techniques of scooping and showering provide care for the body in two distinct ways. On the one hand, scooping using cold water aims to relieve the body from heat and provide refreshment. On the other hand, showering using hot water provides care for the body through relaxation and comfort, rather than care by cleaning the body. This finding reflects Shove's (2003) argument that suggests how showers have become framed in terms of stress relief and relaxation, rather than the removal of dirt.

There was a silence in washing talk in terms of presentation and production of self. Shove (2003) considers the relationship between the bathroom and commodification of self, exploring Bourdieu's (1984) notion of 'cosmetic investment' which involves hedonistic pampering, using soaps, gels, lotions, and so on. Ideas of self-indulgence and use of bathroom products were absent in Burmese migrants' narratives. This suggests that washing the body was understood more in terms of pure refreshment or comfort rather than presentation of self.

9.3 Washing Bodies Summary

This section has illustrated the diversity of bodily washing practices across the 16 narratives. The findings discussed in this section reveal how the hygiene practices of Burmese migrants help maintain a sense of home and self. Most participants (12 out of the 16) now wash their bodies by showering on a daily basis. The demise of scooping with migration is associated with changing ideas about the practice of washing bodies, which become based on the ability to use hot water as a warming, relaxing practice. Conforming to the Australian norm of daily showering is underpinned by values of comfort and convenience. Yet, despite this loss of practice, the preference for scooping amongst some participants to become clean and cool demonstrates how participants maintain a sense of being Burmese. Retaining scooping allows participants to access their embodied knowledge of feeling fresh, and therefore 'right'. In turn, this helps to establish identity and differentiate oneself as being Burmese from the wider population of Anglo-Australians. Scooping offers imaginative capacities of becoming more mindful of the relationship between the body and water. Rather than standing under a seemingly

unlimited flow of water from a shower head, the practice of using buckets and scoops may increase the mindfulness of water consumption.

9.4 Laundry Practices

The aim of this section is to explore the laundering practices of Burmese migrants as a home-making practice. The section investigates how domestic subjectivities and the place of home are simultaneously made and remade through practices of cleaning clothes, ideas of the 'best' methods to wash clothes, and gendered dynamics associated with doing the laundry. Do Burmese migrants bring capacities to help rethink laundry practices dominated by the majority white culture?

Echoing Shove's (2003) words, domestic laundering is a composite and complex practice and one that, in the global North, has been transformed significantly by the introduction of new technologies, materials, and appliances. Why people wash clothes is explained by Shove (2003) through discourses of sensation (the idea of revitalising bodies and restoring smelly clothes to acceptable standards of comfort), disinfection (defence against potentially harmful microbes) and deodorization (the idea of freshening-up clothes). As Shove (2003, p.126) argues, today, in the Western world, the dominant rationale for cleaning clothes has shifted away from ideas of cleanliness to "about decontaminating clothes that have been in contact with the body and restoring valued attributes of style, feel and image." According to Gram-Hanssen (2008, p.1186), the washing machine has been "reinterpreted" by users for other purposes than cleaning clothes, such as maintaining 'easy' domestic routines. Furthermore, Gram-Hanssen (2007) highlights the importance of investigating everyday laundry practices, and shows how cultural understandings and practices about cleanliness are transferred from parents to children. Drawing on Pink (2005), Jack (2013) reminds us that although cultural expectations of cleanliness are not explicit, people have an embodied sense of the 'right' way of doing the laundry and presentation of self to others. 'Doing the laundry' is typically considered housework and women's responsibility (Gibson et al., 2013). Kaufmann (1998) suggests that women's senses of self are subject to how laundry is managed.

Indeed, Shove (2003) argues that laundry-related responsibilities are inextricably tied up with the reproduction of gendered identities.

Similar to the trends that emerged in washing bodies, laundry related responsibilities of Burmese households are bound-up in socio-economic status. Those who held relatively privileged positions living in Burma were able to employ housemaids to do the majority of housework, including the laundry. For example, Tin Theik's involvement in the laundry routine at home in Burma was limited to putting his dirty clothes in the basket.

Louisa: And how would you go about washing your clothes when you lived in Burma?

Tin Theik: I don't know, cos, like, we never washed the clothes, only like, the people who work in our house, like a maid.

Louisa: Ah, so you wouldn't really be part of that when you lived there.

Tin Theik: Yeah. Just dropping the basket and they do the work.

For April, Min, Kyaw Zaw and May, when living in Burma, laundering was also the responsibility of housemaids. Min's experience of laundering in Burma positioned him as an observer rather than a participant. He remembers watching maids wash clothes in cold water, using their hands and wooden sticks, soaking in buckets and wringing out excess water. In Min's opinion, hand washing clothes this way "saves a lot of water compared to washing machines. Because sometimes washing machines, they add a lot of water, they rinse off, three times." Living in a student share house in Sydney, Min's laundry is now his own responsibility, and is a practice that reveals his water conscious behaviour. Using a front-loader, like the majority of Australian households (Pakula and Stamminger, 2010), Min chooses not to soak his clothes out of concern of using "additional water", waits until he has what he believes to be a large enough load to warrant using the washing machine, and avoids using hot water in order to save money on electricity bills.

April had some experience of hand washing her clothes in Burma, despite the help of a maid. April comments on how hand washing was "quite a long process and you have to put a lot of hard work." In

contrast, the washing machine in her share house in Sydney makes this process much easier: "Now I live in Australia I only have to put in the washing machine, that's it, and push the button." Similar to April, May also sometimes helped with the laundry in Burma, although the family employed a maid. May explains how clothes would be hand washed with soap (distinguished from soap used for washing the body) and larger items, such as bed sheets would be washed using a special wooden stick. This method of using a stick to wash with is, in May's experience, something that is inherently 'Burmese', "So for us, for my country, for Burmese people, they use the ... stick." For these participants, after migration to Australia, employing domestic services was no longer an option and using a washing machine alongside hand washing became integrated into the laundering routine.

On the other end of the spectrum, less wealthy participants living outside of urban centres in Burma were much more involved in laundry activities. For Mya, Rudy, Sui and Myint, laundering involved physically demanding manual labour. Mya explains how the process of washing clothes involved soaking in cold stream water in a bucket, rubbing clothes with soap with her hands before rinsing in another bucket and hanging them out to dry. Clothes would have to be washed every day due to work on the farm dirtying them. The process of soaking and hand washing clothes in buckets was similar for all participants who did not have the luxury of a washing machine. Now, living in Australia, these women all have access to a washing machine. For Mya, a washing machine was provided in her home by a refugee organisation, along with beds and a fridge. This illustrates how the washing machine in Australia is considered an essential home-making appliance. Having a washing machine is not taken for granted by these women who, in Burma, did not know any other way of washing other than by hand.

Here is very convenient. We have a washing machine and then I put all the clothes in the machine and so just turn it on. (Rudy - translation)

So, here, it's much easier, we just put in the washing machine. (Mya)

Although knowing the washing machine as more

convenient, the preference for hand washing over machine washing for these women is quite clear.

Normally I put in washing machine. But especially for kids clothes, sometimes they're stained so washing machine doesn't wash properly so I rub with my hand first and then put it in washing machine. (Sui - translation)

Actually if I have time I prefer to wash in Burmese way. In here, we put all the clothes in machine so it is not clean as much as when we wash with our hands. So sometimes it's good, you know, new clothes I just wash with my hands, I don't want to wash with washing machine. (Rudy - translation)

Hand wash is much cleaner than using by washing machine. (Tin)

For these women, hand washing is understood as more effective at removing stains and cleaning clothes. The propriety for washing is thus based on ideas of cleanliness and disinfection, rather than sets of ideas about restoring attributes of style, feel and image. Following Parr (1999) and Meintjes (2001), retaining hand washing practices is important in (re)making domestic subjectivities. Hand washing represents important role-defining qualities, symbolising domestic care and positioning women's responsibilities in the home as care giver. The washing machine, on the other hand, as a man-made appliance is 'not good enough' and symbolises laziness and lack of domestic commitment (Meintjes, 2001). For the women who retain hand washing, the washing machine is (mostly) resisted in ways that reflect and redefine their domestic identities. The machine may be conceived as a technology that is simultaneously deskilling and reskilling the women who use it. On the one hand, the technology is deskilling, as complicated practices of using wooden sticks and hand washing methods are lost, and just a push of a button is now required. On the other hand, women are learning new skills in how to operate this technology. For one older woman however, it is the practice of learning this new technology that reinforces her hand washing practices, as despite being taught by her daughter, she has not grasped how to use the machine.

What became clear throughout the narratives was the gendered nature of housework and in particular,

the duty of laundering. In Burma, doing laundry was considered to be 'women's work'. Kyaw Zaw illustrates this point wonderfully, informing the researcher that they would be better off discussing laundering practices with his wife.

Louisa: How many loads of washing would you do a week?

Kyaw Zaw: I think-- you would have [better] experience talking with my wife.

That said, in some households, the domestic division of labour seems to be shifting after migration to Australia. For example, Mya points out how her husband now helps out with domestic chores.

Louisa: And now that you live in Australia do you still do the majority of the washing up or does your husband help out as well?

Mya: Yes, my husband is helping, he is very supportive so, sometimes he will do washing clothes and sometimes he helps me clean the plates.

Another gendered aspect of laundry routines is how clothes are sorted. In some Burmese households, women's and men's clothes are washed separately. Tin explains why she and her mother wash their *longyi* separately from male clothes due to the patriarchal 'Burmese culture', which engenders female and male mixing as something of a social taboo.

Our culture, the men is, high value than women. So, especially in the Burmese villages. When you go to Pagoda [temple], some of the very holy place, they won't allow to go to for the women. So they don't classify women as lower position, they don't do it like that, but our culture is, men ... more high power, more valuable. And then husband and wife, first priority to the husband and then the kids, daughters, sons, they going to respect father more than mum. In traditional culture. So ... because we think that women, we have a period, something like that, so we think this is not going to mix with the men's clothes. For us as well, me and my mum wash together, our clothes. My brother, he wash his stuff.

For Tin and her mother, the act of separating men's clothes from women's clothes is still practiced living in Australia, which points to how a gender order is reproduced through laundry practices.

9.5 Chapter Summary

Do Burmese migrants bring different understandings of how we can imagine both showering and laundry practices? This section reveals several important insights into this question by thinking about how laundering and showering practices constitute home-making practices in Burmese migrant households. The results from exploration into 'washing bodies' suggest how the intimacy of Burmese scooping practices may work to increase the mindfulness of domestic water consumption. In terms of laundry practices, firstly, for some Burmese households in Australia is very much a gendered practice. Doing the laundry thus informs Burmese women's role in the family home and sense of self as care-giver. Secondly, different ideas behind the reasons for washing clothes emerged through the narratives, particularly through conversations with women. Implicit in these ideas of clothes washing were the understandings of washing to produce clean clothes, rather than to maintain or freshen clothes. Thirdly, the skills associated with laundering were made apparent. Different skills were required for hand washing and using the technology of the washing machine. The practice of hand washing offers imaginative capacities into the ways domestic water can be recycled. As practiced by some participants, water from hand washing can be reused for other domestic duties, such as cleaning floors and windows. Furthermore, hand washing has the potential to increase our mindfulness of water consumption, as opposed to water being out of sight, hidden inside the washing machine and disposed of invisibly through pipes.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION



To conclude, this chapter discusses the researcher's changing positionality, revisits the project aims to summarise the key findings, and suggests future research agendas.

10.1 Changing Positionality

Following Waitt (2010) and Miller Cleary (2013), it is important to consider how one's positionality changes over the course of the research. Thus, the researcher's ongoing reflections were recorded in a research diary. Section 3.2.2 discussed how the researcher shaped the project. Box 6 explores how the project shaped the researcher. Of particular importance is my heightened awareness of the sensuous materiality of water, the importance of the olfactory in my ideas of cleanliness, and processes by which migrants learn shared cultural norms that help constitute showers and laundries. Critically reflecting on my positionality revealed how I became more aware of my bodily skills and embodied knowledge of domestic water. Additionally, it highlighted the notable absence of the sensory importance of smelling 'clean' in participant narratives, especially in comparison to research which has revealed the importance of eradicating sweat and smelling 'nice' for young, Australian bodies (Waitt, 2014).

10.2 Revisiting the Research Aims: Key Findings

The overarching aim of this research was to respond to the gap in the literature around the cultural environmental knowledge of ethnic minority groups in relation to household sustainability. In particular, this research drew on a post-structuralist feminist approach proposed by Pink et al. (2013) to explore the ideas, practices, and experiences that mobilise the uses of water as a home-making practice. This approach advocates for thinking through how experiences, shaped by the relationships between bodies, skills, and the environment, contribute to the making of a place as home. A qualitative mixed methods approach enabled the recruitment of and provided in-depth insights from a diverse group of 16 Burmese migrants living in metropolitan NSW. Semi-structured interviews and home insights allowed the researcher to gain access to

lived experiences, life narratives and embodied knowledge of water as a home-making practice. The four research questions outlined in Chapter 1 are revisited in the following sections.

10.2.1 What ideas and practices about domestic water do first generation Burmese migrants bring to recreate a sense of home in Australia?

Results Chapters 4 to 9 present the different ideas and practices about domestic water that first generation Burmese migrants bring with them to Australia to help maintain a place as home. Firstly, the vignette chapters revealed the importance of the idea of minimising waste water for Burmese households. This importance of reducing waste and saving water emerged from a combined result of past experiences of water shortages in Burma, accepted social norms in Burma for the 'right' way to use water, intimate connections with water through the demands of physical labour, and reciprocal relationships of care stemming from Buddhism.

In some cases, minimising water wastage was reflected in life in Australia, with Burmese migrant households practising water recycling methods, such as reusing water for washing rice and vegetables on gardens, reusing laundry water for cleaning floors, and collecting leaking tap water to be used for hand washing clothes. These recycling practices illustrate how ideas and practices are sustained in Australia to maintain a sense of self and home. A related idea about minimising the waste of domestic water was tied to faith, specifically Buddhism. For Buddhists, water is used to create sacred spaces within home shrines (see Chapter 6). These religious water rituals help to (re)create not only a sense of self as Buddhist and sense of home, but also an obligation to save water and minimise waste.

However, some households, despite having inherent values of water saving, struggle to maintain water saving practices due to the materiality, comfort, convenience, and social norms of Australian life. For example, for some, showering became a more frequent and water intensive practice compared to scooping. Additionally, the washing machine became integrated into the laundering routine, which limited the water that could be reused due to its automated disposal through pipes. Furthermore, for participants who were subsistence farmers in

Box 6: Researcher positionality: How has the project shaped me?

Completion of data collection for the project allowed a moment of reflection on how my positionality has changed over the course of the research. The encounters that I have had in this research have challenged me to rethink my own everyday routines involving water and how these constitute home-making practices. Thinking critically about everyday domestic practices, I now understand them as much more than a mundane part of everyday life. Instead, these practices give us insights into the complex arrangements of home, and extend to questions regarding the challenges of household sustainability.

‘Water and the body’ – My initial understanding of the role of household water was limited to ideas of valuation - water saving and wasting. As I became more immersed in the project, I became aware of how our sensory bodies are intimately involved in water consumption practices. Throughout the project, I became more aware of my own bodily involvement with water. For example, when it comes to showering, smelling ‘nice’ is really important for me. This realisation occurred when I needed to switch from ‘nice’ smelling shower gels to a fragrance-free body wash, on account of a skin condition. I realised that after showering without these ‘nice’ fragrances, I didn’t feel as ‘good’ -something did not feel quite ‘right’. My ideas about personal hygiene contrast with those of the participants, who very rarely mentioned anything to do with soaps or gels, or the need to smell ‘nice’ after a shower, instead speaking of washing in terms of refreshment or relaxation.

‘Changing practices’ – As a migrant to Australia myself, this project has allowed me to reflect upon how my own everyday practices have changed with migration. Although my routine of showering regularly (once daily in the morning) and my ideas about needing to smell ‘nice’ remain unchanged, my use of bathroom accessories has changed. In England, showering involved using a ‘bath lily’ to lather shower gel onto my body. Arriving in Australia, and encountering a shared shower in university accommodation, I noticed the absence of my ‘bath lily’. Instead, I noticed an unfamiliar product in the shower, a bar of soap. For me, bars of soap were reserved for hand washing only, never for the whole body. Three years on living in Australia I still find the notion of washing my body with a bar of soap uncomfortable, yet my bath lily is now no longer a part of my showering routine. The bath lily has been jettisoned as I conformed to the practices of other Australians my age. This is similar to how the buckets and scoops of some participants in the study were put aside as showering became the norm.

‘Being Anglo-Australian’ – As discussed in Chapter 3, my ethnicity as a white Anglo-Australian was one of the challenges encountered in this cross-cultural research. However, despite being an ‘outsider’ in terms of my ‘whiteness’, I felt that I was able to connect with some participants through other aspects of my identity, such as being a migrant to Australia myself, and sharing university experiences.

This project has not only allowed me to enhance my understanding of the role of water as a home-making practice, but I have also had the opportunity to experience a whole new culture. Visiting the homes of participants I have tried traditional Burmese food and tasted treated (boiled) water. Although I have encountered challenges along the way, the enthusiasm that participants and cultural liaison assistants showed for my project, with some even feeling ‘privileged’ to be part of my research, was inspiring. Investigating water in Burmese households has been far from mundane.

Burma, some of the water saving and recycling practices that they had carried out in Burma were no longer possible in the absence of living with farm animals.

10.2.2 Which ideas and practices around domestic water are retained after migrating to Australia and why?

Results Chapters 4 to 9 explored the water-related home-making practices of Burmese migrants, paying attention to whether these practices are retained post-migration. Overall, most participants in this study lost or changed their past practices. However, a few had retained certain practices, discussed as trusted water and intimate water.

Chapter 8, which focused upon trusted drinking water, revealed that four out of the 16 participants continued the water treatment techniques that they had learnt in Burma. The retention of these practices were based on ingrained practice, recreating a sense of home, and maintaining roles and responsibilities of care giving to family and/or to self. Retaining these drinking water practices was found to be more often about maintaining 'healthy bodies' and 'domicile bodies' rather than 'Burmese bodies'.

Chapter 9 focused on intimate water by discussing the personal hygiene practices of washing bodies and laundering. This chapter reported that four out of the 16 participants continued to employ the practice of scooping, rather than showering, as a method of washing oneself. The retention of this washing technique was underpinned by ingrained practice, embodied knowledge of feeling fresh and therefore 'right', and maintaining a sense of self and home. Chapter 9 revealed gendered dynamics of laundry in Burmese households, with women positioned as primarily responsible for this task. Many women retained hand washing practices in Australia, expressing that the washing machine did not meet their expectations of cleanliness.

10.2.3 Which ideas and practices around domestic water changed after migration to Australia and why?

Chapter 8 explored trusted drinking water. Attention was drawn to the conflicting ideas of safe, clean drinking water after migrating to Australia. For some migrants, it was only after migrating to Australia that they had access to drinking water primarily through the tap, rather than relying on wells,

streams or purchasing bottled water. Most migrants who treated their drinking water in Burma no longer did so living in Australia. In contrast to those who continued treatment methods, most migrants invest their trust in the governance of Australian piped-water, and do not have a fear of falling ill from untreated tap water. Trust of Australian tap water was built upon knowledge of treatment standards. Yet, despite the trust in a government institution, moments of anxiety emerged as responses from the sensory body, particularly taste, resulted in concerns about jeopardising the healthy body.

Chapter 9 illustrated how bathing and laundering practices for participants changed since migration. The majority of migrants (12 out of the 16) now shower on a daily basis rather than using scooping practices. Helping to explain this transition were the material constraints of bathrooms alongside changing ideas of the practice of washing bodies, which became based on the ability to use hot water as a warming, relaxing practice. Conforming to the Australian norm of daily showering is underpinned by expressions of the values of comfort and convenience. In terms of laundering, all migrants have incorporated the washing machine into their routine. Again, this is due to the convenience of this technology, and the ease of which laundering is now completed, compared to the physically demanding labour of laundering in Burma.

In summary, many practices have changed since migration as Burmese migrants attempt to reschedule their everyday lives according to the rhythms, times, paces, and spaces of Australian life, of which are dictated by social norms and Big Water systems of supply.

10.2.4 What imaginative capacities surrounding domestic water do first generation Burmese migrants bring to Australia and how can these inform household sustainability policies around water consumption?

Migrants are much more than numbers added onto the Australian population annually, creating national and local-level population pressures and environmental harm purely by being here. An alternative framing could position them as valuable (and valued) resources for thinking through the ways we organise and run our cities, towns and

regions; for how we operate and live in our households and on our farms; and for how we relate to and use our natural resources and environments (Klocker & Head, 2013, p.55).

Responding to Klocker and Head's (2013) call, this thesis suggests three inter-related lessons that we can learn from Burmese migrants to rethink how we operate and live in our households: mindfulness, responsibility, and intimacy. Mindfulness refers to how water is often more visible to first generation migrants because of their familiarity with a range of systems of supply, and questions surrounding trusted potable water. Responsibility to domestic water arises not only from the dominant idea of water being a precious resource to be conserved, but also from the emotional hurt from witnessing waste. Each participant illustrated in different ways how responsibility and mindfulness emerged through the intimate connections they have with water, through practices such as scooping, collecting, and purifying water.

These lessons may help to inform water-related household sustainability objectives. Intimate connections through sensorial knowledge help us to become more mindful of the relationship between the body and water and ultimately form responsibilities surrounding the care, and hence saving, of water. Water in Burma was known to be sacred and precious, as opposed to Australian domestic water, which was understood by some to be 'unlimited'. This distinction between Burmese and Australian water points to the power of the systems of supply in urban Australia that diminish intimate connections with water, hence reducing mindfulness and responsibility to water. Forming reciprocal relationships with water, like that of Burmese migrants, may help to lead Australian households away from 'fantasies of an endless supply', and towards more water conscious behaviours and practices.

10.3 Future Research

By exploring Burmese domestic water cultures, this thesis takes a small step to address the 'whiteness' of household sustainability research. Further research is necessary in order to gain a deeper appreciation

of what ethnic diversity can offer in terms of household sustainability objectives. This includes research with migrants of different ethnicities in order to appreciate Australia's multicultural society. However, before this step, there is much more work that can be carried out within Burmese households. There are many other dimensions of household sustainability yet to be investigated including energy, waste, and food. First, this project suggests that it might be productive to design research that focuses more specifically on household structures, sharing practices, or particular rooms – like kitchens, toilets, and laundries.

Second, future research may seek to explore generational change to further understand how certain practices are retained or lost after migration. Generational change between first and second generation migrants will provide insights from those who may be familiar with both the wider dominant social norms surrounding home-making practices, and the social norms of their migrant parents.

Lastly, regardless of future research directions, the agenda must always remain mindful to the methodological challenges and ethical responsibilities of conducting cross-cultural research. Working with skilled cultural liaisons is essential for future research, particularly for the use of methods that seek in-depth life narratives and access to embodied knowledge. Future research may consider projects designed around more participatory style research agendas that spend more time in households, in comparison with the fleeting encounters of semi-structured interviews.

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APPROVAL LETTER

In reply please quote: HE14/393

26 September 2014

Ms Louisa Welland
3 Harkness Ave
Keiraville, Wollongong NSW 2500

Dear Ms Welland

Thank you for your response dated 23 September 2014 to the HREC review of the application detailed below. I am pleased to advise that the application has been approved.

Ethics Number: HE14/393

Project Title: Cultures of Water: Exploring the water values and everyday practices of Burmese-Australians

Researchers: Ms Louisa Welland, Professor Gordon Waitt

Documents Approved: -Original Ethics Application (dated 17/9/14)
-Interview Script (version received 17/9/14)
-Consent Form for Stage 1 (version received 17/9/14)
-Consent Form for stage 2- Home Insights (version received 17/9/14)
-Consent Form for stage 2- Photographs and Follow up conversation (version received 17/9/14)
-Participant Information Sheet (version 2: dated 23/9/14)
-Recruitment Script (version 2: dated 23/9/14)

Approval Date: 25 September 2014

Expiry Date: 24 September 2015

The University of Wollongong/Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District Social Sciences HREC is constituted and functions in accordance with the NHMRC *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*. The HREC has reviewed the research proposal for compliance with the *National Statement* and approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with this document.

Approval by the HREC is for a twelve month period. Further extension will be considered on receipt of a progress report prior to expiry date. Continuing approval requires:

- The submission of a progress report annually and on completion of your project. The progress report template is available at <http://www.uow.edu.au/research/ethics/human/index.html>. This report must be completed, signed by the researchers and the appropriate Head of Unit, and returned to the Research Services Office prior to the expiry date.
- Approval by the HREC of any proposed changes to the protocol including changes to investigators involved
- Immediate report of serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants
- Immediate report of unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.

Ethics Unit, Research Services Office
University of Wollongong NSW 2522 Australia
Telephone (02) 4221 3386 Facsimile (02) 4221 4338
Email: rso-ethics@uow.edu.au Web: www.uow.edu.au

If you have any queries regarding the HREC review process, please contact the Ethics Unit on phone 4221 3386 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Clapham', with a stylized, flowing script.

Professor Kathleen Clapham

Chair, Social Sciences

Human Research Ethics Committee

Appendix B: Strategies for ensuring rigour in qualitative research

Table adapted from Baxter and Eyles (1997, p.512)

RESEARCH STRATEGY	Credibility (accuracy of data)	Transferability (results are transferable).	Dependability (impact of the researcher on data collection and interpretation).	Confirmability (role of researcher in relationship to research).
Literature review (situate project in context and identify significance of research)	✓	✓		
Recruitment	✓	✓		
Semi-structured interviews with schedule		✓	✓	
Home insights		✓	✓	
Ethics (participant information sheets, consent forms, formal ethics application approved)	✓		✓	
Recording interview	✓		✓	
Transcribing interview (verbatim account, uniform symbols)		✓	✓	
Discourse analysis		✓	✓	✓
Narrative analysis	✓			
Triangulation (multiple data sources)	✓	✓	✓	
Research diary			✓	✓
Positionality statements	✓			✓
Peer debriefing (regular meetings with supervisor providing feedback)	✓		✓	

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

TITLE: 'Cultures of Water: Exploring the Everyday Water Values and Practices of Burmese-Australians.'

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH: Water is integral, but often an overlooked part of everyday life. Equally the voice of minority migrant groups is often ignored in research exploring how Australians value water. Hence, the project aims to address these gaps by better understanding Burmese-Australians' relationships with water.

INVESTIGATORS:

Professor Gordon Waitt, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Wollongong; gwaitt@uow.edu.au ; 02 4221 3684

Louisa Welland (student investigator), Faculty of Social Sciences, law485@uowmail.edu.au ; 0431739859

WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED TO DO: If you choose to participate, you will be invited to talk about the ways you use water at home. These conversations will occur at a time and location that suits you..

There are two potential stages to this study.

Stage 1: Talking Water – We will ask you to tell us a bit about your background; as well as exploring water in the context of drinking, washing-up, laundry, showering, gardening and toilets.

Examples of the questions you will be asked includes:

- Please, tell me about showering/baths when you lived/growing-up in Burma?
- Since living in Australia, tell me about showering/baths. In what ways do you think you have changed how you use water to keep yourself clean since arriving in Australia?

This interview is expected to be roughly an hour in duration.

Stage 2: Doing Water – This stage is designed to learn more about what you do with water in your home. To learn more about your relationship with water you can either (1) take photographs over a week that illustrate your water practice, then talk about these with Louisa, or (2) at a convenient time provide insights by showing Louisa what you do with water around your home. Each option will last approximately an hour.

- Consent will be reconfirmed throughout the different stages of the study.
- We will ask for permission to audio-record the interviews.
- The level and frequency of your involvement will be tailored to meet your time constraints

POSSIBLE RISKS, INCONVENIENCES AND DISCOMFORTS: Apart from the time taken to participate in this research, we can foresee no inconvenience for you. We will tailor your involvement to suit your availability and needs and you will not be pressured to participate in more activities than you feel comfortable with. The interviews will be conducted professionally and ethically. You will not be pressured to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable, and your involvement is entirely voluntary. You may halt your participation at any time and withdraw any data you have provided until that point. You can also withdraw any data you have provided up until the end of December 2014. If

you decide not to participate, this will not affect your relationship with the University of Wollongong.

FUNDING AND BENEFITS: The research will be used to better understand the water use practices of Burmese-Australians. It will become the basis of an honours thesis and may be published in academic journal articles, books, and conference papers. The findings may also be discussed in media interviews. You will be able to choose whether you would prefer to be referred to by your real name in published materials, or whether you would prefer to use a pseudonym (false name). In accordance with the law, all data that we obtain from you will be stored for a minimum of 5 years in locked filing cabinets in Department of Geography and Sustainable Communities and on password protected computers. With approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee, the data may continue to be used by the researchers after the 5 year period in related research and publications.

ETHICS REVIEW AND COMPLAINTS: This study was reviewed by the Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee, University of Wollongong. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the way this research has been conducted please contact the UOW Ethics Officer on (02) 4221 3386 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Louisa Welland. Thank you for your interest in this study.

CONSENT FORM FOR STAGE 1 – TALKING WATER (Interviews)

RESEARCH TITLE: 'Cultures of Water: Exploring the Everyday Water Values and Practices of Burmese-Australians.'

RESEARCHERS: Gordon Waitt and Louisa Welland

Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Wollongong

I have been given information about the project 'Cultures of Water: Exploring the Everyday Water Values and Practices of Burmese-Australians.' I have discussed the research project with Louisa Welland, who is conducting this research as part of a University of Wollongong Honours thesis in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Wollongong.

I have been advised of the potential risks and burdens associated with this research, which include the time taken to participate in interviews. I understand that my participation in Stage 2 is optional. A separate consent form will be provided for those activities. Consent will also be reconfirmed before each interview.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, I am free to refuse to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time. If I decide not to participate or withdraw my consent, this will not affect my relationship with the University of Wollongong. I also understand that I can withdraw any data that I have contributed to the project up until the end of December 2014.

If I have any enquires about the research, I can contact Gordon Waitt (4221 3684). If I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact the Ethics Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, Office of Research, University of Wollongong on (02) 4298 1331 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au By signing below I am indicating my consent to (please tick):

☐ Participate in an interview

☐ Have an audio-recording of the interview made for the purposes of transcription

In published materials relating to this research, I would like to be referred to by (please tick one):

☐ My real/given name

☐ A pseudonym (false name)

I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used for an honours thesis and may be used to write academic journal articles, books and conference papers. I also understand that the data collected may be used when communicating research outcomes to the media. I consent for the data I provide to be used in these ways.

Signed

Date

Name (please print)

.....

...../...../.....

.....

CONSENT FORM FOR STAGE 2 - DOING WATER (Home insights)

RESEARCH TITLE: 'Cultures of Water: Exploring the Everyday Water Values and Practices of Burmese-Australians.'

RESEARCHERS: Gordon Waitt and Louisa Welland

Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Wollongong

I have been given information about the project 'Cultures of Water: Exploring the Everyday Water Values and Practices of Burmese-Australians.' I have discussed the research project with Louisa Welland, who is conducting this research as part of a University of Wollongong Honours thesis in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Wollongong.

I have been advised of the potential risks and burdens associated with this research, which include the time taken to participate. I understand that my participation in the research activities is optional. Consent will be reconfirmed before each stage of the research.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, I am free to refuse to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time. If I decide not to participate or withdraw my consent, this will not affect my relationship with the University of Wollongong. I also understand that I can withdraw any data that I have contributed to the project up until the end of December 2014.

If I have any enquires about the research, I can contact Gordon Waitt (42213684). If I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact the Ethics Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, Office of Research, University of Wollongong on (02) 4298 1331 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au By signing below I am indicating my consent to (please tick):

☐ Participate in giving the researcher a home insight to show how I use water

In published materials relating to this research, I would like to be referred to by (please tick one):

☐ My real/given name ☐ A pseudonym (false name)

I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used for academic journal articles, books and conferences, as well as an honours thesis. I also understand that the data collected may be used when communicating research outcomes to the media. I consent for the data I provide to be used in these ways.

Signed

Date

Name (please print)

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Interview schedule

Getting to know you

To start, can please share your story. I am interested in three themes: growing up, migrating to Australia, and making Australia home.

Biography

- How long have you lived in Australia? When did you move to Australia?
- Where did you live before? Village / city? Can you show on the map?
- When you lived in Burma, did it rain often? Is Australia different (drier/wetter?)
- Have you noticed seasonal differences in rainfall in Australia? Is this similar/different to Burma?
- What ethnicity do you identify yourself as?
- Who do you live with?
- Tell me about who lives in your household?
- What is the relationship between these household members?
- Do you rent/own/pay off mortgage? Public housing?
- Have you ever lived without mains water supply?

Okay, now we are going to talk about water. I am particularly interested in your stories about water. So, to start: can you tell me what water means to you?

Does water have any special religious or cultural significance to you/in Burma? Is it part of any religious or cultural practices? Do you still do these now that you live in Australia?

What do you understand by saving water?

When did you become aware of this idea of saving water?

Is saving water important at home? When did it become important? Why?

What sort of things do you do to save water?

Have you experienced droughts when living in Australia? Did this affect how you used water (water restrictions)? Did you experience this in Burma?

Talking about household water is something that you may or may not have thought about before.

Have you ever talked about household water with family and/or friends? When, what contexts?

Okay, now we are going to explore different practices that involve water – and talk about drinking, washing-up, showering/bathing, laundry, gardening and toilets.

Drinking water

- Tell me about how you accessed drinking water when you lived in/growing-up in Burma?
- Prompts around – source/collection/processing/storage/taste/water-borne illness
- Since living in Australia, tell me about how you access drinking water. How is it different to get drinking water living in Australia? Do you think about drinking water differently now you live in Australia?
- Prompts around – sources of drinking water/collection/processing/storage/drink more or less water/source of change/taste (chemicals?)/ different to other Australians (how?)

- Does ease of access to drinking water in Australia change how you value it, compared to living in Burma?

Washing-up water

- Please, tell me about washing up the dishes when you lived/growing-up in Burma
- Prompts around – who/how/best source of water for washing up and use of water after washing-up
- Since living in Australia, tell me about washing the dishes. In what ways do you think you have changed how you wash-up the dishes since arriving in Australia?
- Prompts around – best water for washing-up/ number of sinks/ use of washing-up liquid/ sources of change in washing-up practice/ who/ use of water after washing-up / dishwasher/ different to other Australians (how?)

Bathing and showering

- Please, tell me about washing in baths and or showers when you lived/growing-up in Burma?
- Prompts around - best water for cleaning yourself/ best way/ how long/ how often/ re-using bath/shower water?
- Since living in Australia, tell me about having showers/baths. In what ways do you think you have changed how you keep yourself clean since arriving in Australia?
- Prompts around – best water for showering bathing/ length/ number in a week/day / use of bath/shower water for anything else / sources of change in how best to keep clean/ use of water after washing / dishwasher/ different to other Australians (how?)
- Who showers in the family? Who has baths?

Laundry

- Please, tell me about washing clothes when you lived/growing-up in Burma?
- Prompts around – who/how/best source of water for washing clothes and use of water after washing-clothes
- Since living in Australia, tell me about having washing your clothes. In what ways do you think you have changed how wash your clothes since arriving in Australia?
- Prompts around – who does this work/ washing machines (front/top loader)/ temperature/ best water for washing clothes/ number of loads/ when clothes are considered dirty/ sources of change in doing laundry or understanding of dirty clothes/ use of water after washing clothes/ different to other Australians (how?)

Toilets

- Please, tell me about if water was an important part of toilet practices when you lived/ growing-up in Burma?
- What sort of toilets did you use in Burma? Did you have your own toilet? Inside/outside?
- Is washing hands after important?
- Since living in Australia, tell me about your toilet practices. In what ways do you think you have changed your toilet practices since arriving in Australia?
- Prompts around – use of toilets / rules around flushing/ different to other Australians (how?)

Gardening

- Please, tell me about watering gardens/plants when you lived/growing-up in Burma?
- Prompts around – who/how/best source of water for watering plants (grey – rain – mains) / collection (rain water tank)/storage/ watering techniques (hose/watering can)
- Since living in Australia, tell me about gardening and watering plants. In what ways do you think you have changed how water your garden/plants since arriving in Australia?
- Prompts around – who does this work/ how/ best water for watering plants/ changing what is grown in the garden (removal of plants/swimming pools) / collection/storage/watering techniques (drip, hose, etc)/ different to other Australians (how?)

- Washing the car? Any other outside water uses?

Do you miss any of these homemaking practices since moving to Australia? Or are you glad to leave them behind?

Family disagreements

We have explored a number of different practices around water – drinking, washing-up, laundry, laundry, gardening, toilets.

- Are there disagreements between family members on the right way of using water for any of these practices?
- Is water a source of conflict in the house? (Long showering times, some people save water – others don't etc).

Home insights schedule

Home narrative

Aim: Understanding of the participant in relationship to the house as home.

- When did you move into this home?
- Why did you move to this house?
- Since moving in, what sorts of things did you do to make it feel like home?
- Are there things you would still like to do to make it feel right?
- How does this house compare to others that you have lived in?
- Does it lack anything that make it feel right as a home?

Room insights: laundry, kitchen and garden

I am interested in how you have made this room feel 'right' for you. Tell me about why this room is the way it is. What things have you changed? Why did you change this? What sorts of things would you change to make this room feel 'right'? Will you make these changes?

Ask participants to re-enact everyday routines:

- Washing dishes
- Doing the laundry
- Watering the garden

Appendix H: Lists of Contacted Burmese Organisations

Participant recruitment – organisations contacted via email/Facebook/phone

- Illawarra Multicultural Services (IMS) – Wollongong
- Strategic Community Assistance to Refugee Families (SCARF) – Wollongong
- Burmese Rohingya Community in Australia – Sydney
- SBS Burmese Radio Program – Sydney
- Burmese Community Welfare Group – Sydney
- Myanmar Student Society (University of NSW) – Sydney
- Unibodhi (University of Sydney Buddhist Society) – Sydney
- MacBuddhi (Macquarie Buddhist Society) – Sydney
- Nan Tien Temple – Wollongong